

CROSS-GENERATIONAL

COMMUNICATIONS IN THE WORKPLACE

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Capstone Project

ABSTRACT

Communications in the workplace has always been an evolving and sometimes contentious issue. The ever-changing communication environment has made the workplace more efficient and has allowed employees to become more effective in their communication. But communications technology has introduced new issues. Alternate communication styles ranging from texting, messaging and Skyping to on-line hang-out, and on-line chat have created various ways for employees to interact throughout the day. The Minnesota Landscape Arboretum uses many communication methods among employees to convey information about projects, budgets, program goals and issues as well as everyday workplace needs, rules and procedures. The capstone research question asks if varying communication methods are preferred as more meaningful by employees of different age groups or generations currently working at the Arboretum. Research propositions will explore two issues: whether evolving forms of communication and technology add value to the work environment or make communication more confusing to follow; and whether effectiveness of different modes of communication and information exchange in the employee/supervisor relationship varies by generation.

Primary research is comprised of a quantitative survey and qualitative focus group and intensive interviews. An Arboretum employee quantitative survey was completed; six intensive interviews and one focus group with seven employees were conducted. The interviews were intended to gain insight into the generational habits of communication and determine what each interviewee thought was the best channel for effective and efficient communication. The focus group respondents were asked to answer questions used to gain insight into the results of the quantitative survey.

The research findings showed that there were generational differences in the way employees preferred to communicate, although the tools used in communicating were similar. Insights showed varied resistance by supervisors to change the way they communicate with their staff, with some feeling the need to target or focus their communication based on the overall preferred communication style of the team, while other supervisors felt the team should learn to adapt to the current communication channels in order to do their job efficiently.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Nathan Kells has worked in the communications field since 2002. Previously, he was membership coordinator at the Miami Children's Museum and also held events and marketing responsibilities at the Science Museum of Miami, FL. He is currently the Marketing and Membership Supervisor at the University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum located in Chaska, MN. In his current position, he and his team are responsible for different aspects of communications and marketing, including project management of collateral and advertising materials, exhibit and visitor signage, website and video support. His membership responsibilities are supervision of sales acquisition and retention of 24,000+ member households, and building member relationships and retention. For the last two years, Kells has lead his membership team to more than \$1 million in annual sales, breaking previous records at the Arboretum. He has presented a session at the American Public Gardens Association national conference and is involved in collaborative membership marketing planning with local museums and attractions.

Kells has an undergraduate degree from St. Cloud State University and is a graduate of the University of Minnesota and this report is the capstone project for his Professional M.A. in Strategic Communication through the School of Journalism.

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Communication is the most important tool used in the workplace.

Meaningful and efficient internal (peer to peer) and external (organization to consumer) dialogue is vital to the daily proficiency of an organization.

HYPOTHESIS

- ☐ Preferences for workplace communication channels vary by age groups or generation.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Whether effectiveness of different modes of communication and information exchange in the employee-supervisor relationship varies by generation.

- ☐ How do different modes of communication shape supervisor/leadership styles?
- ☐ How do evolving forms of communication and technology add value to work environment and make communication more effective in communicating with multiple generations in the workplace?

Research findings and insights will shape the direction of future organizational communications at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum as well as spotlight the urgency for planning improved internal communications to ensure:

- ☐ **Increased workplace efficiency**
- ☐ **Improved communication quality**
- ☐ **Creation of a more satisfied workforce**
- ☐ **Creation of a more productive workplace**
- ☐ **Improved workplace morale and employee relationships**
- ☐ **Reduced turnover**
- ☐ **Increased employee engagement**

BACKGROUND:

The Minnesota Landscape Arboretum is part of the College of Food, Agriculture and Natural Resource Sciences (CFANS) at the University of Minnesota. The Arboretum operates as a quasi-self-sustaining attraction, with less than \$1 million in support from the University of Minnesota out of its annual \$10 million budget. It is located at the intersection of Highways 5 and 41 in Chanhassen, Minn. The Arboretum was created out of the Horticultural Research Center, more than 100 years ago, from land donated by the Minnetonka Garden Club and Minneapolis Men's Garden Club. In 1958, Dr. Leon Snyder served as founding director, continuing with the intent of using the land for the research and development of cold-hardy plants that could withstand the harsh Minnesota weather.

The Arboretum has become the premier northern public garden. With the most recent land acquisition in 2011, the Arboretum is now 1,200+ acres, making it one of the top 10 largest public gardens in the nation. The Arboretum ranks among the top metro area attractions, as ranked by Explore Minnesota and is no longer the Midwest's best kept secret.

The pressure and stress on the Arboretum staff has increased due to the growth of the garden, increases in visitorship and demands to generate more self-sustaining operating revenue. In 2012, more than 325,000 visitors came to the Arboretum to see the gardens, take a variety of adult classes, participate in educational youth programs, and enjoy the exhibits or to simply experience the outdoors. These numbers are staggering, up more than 20% over 2009. Yet

Arboretum staff and management have not radically changed the workplace culture to that of a top-tier visitor attraction. Rather, some longtime staff (and volunteers) yearn for the “mom and pop” model while new leadership is engaged in changing the culture to face increased demand for revenue, increased productivity and decisions that will attract increases in visitorship. To other staff, the pressures and expectations to perform their jobs at a higher level are not implemented uniformly, nor is accountability consistent. This workplace environment reinforces the need to build a more effective framework for employee communications and adapt communication channels to build an efficient and comprehensive workforce.

With a new Arboretum director hired in 2010, the Arboretum, although a part of the University of Minnesota, has started to adopt more of a business culture in order to maintain the highest quality experience for the visitor, while aspiring to offer a higher level of horticultural excellence and public education.

The Arboretum employs 230 staff members in the growing season. The culture of the Arboretum is that of a family-oriented, caring, interpersonal environment among long-time employees. Many newer hires (5 years or less) tend to not be embraced in the same fashion, causing difficulty in professional work relationships. This type of attitude adds to other current communication challenges, including limited use of computers with internet access for gardeners and buildings crew, outdated office equipment that runs too slowly for crews on short breaks to obtain the information needed to stay informed and, reliance on face-to-face communications when gardeners are in outlying areas far away from

other staff members. Office staff members are split between three buildings which creates some concerns when face-to-face communication is necessary. Staff members have resorted to using personal cell phones, in addition to radios, to communicate when out on the grounds. This has helped to increase communication efficiency temporarily.

The new leadership, endorsed by the Arboretum Foundation board of directors, has created a strategic development and opportunity plan, laying out the future growth and direction of the Arboretum. In order to meet goals, such as an increase in visitorship to 500,000 in the next five years, a change in how supervisors and employees communicate at the Arboretum is necessary. Generational communication gaps will only hinder growth and delay future plans.

INTRODUCTION:

Cross-generational communication is becoming an increasingly important issue as the largest group of the population, the baby boomers, now consisting of 47 percent of the workforce, have various roles in the workplace. This means, boomers are managing or supervising Gen Xers/Yers while others are being supervised by Gen Xers/Yers. The misuse or lack of some communication channels may cause a breakdown in communication. The reluctance to adjust, possibly due to the lack of knowledge, contributes to the communication barrier among the generations.

Due to the different generations now prevalent in the workplace, the need for multiple forms of communication is necessary to maintain an efficient and effective workforce.

Communication in the workplace has continued to evolve. Since the mass introduction of the internet in the 1990s, forms of communication and interaction have changed drastically. Many employees have adopted the new forms of communication such as email, online chatting/instant messaging, Skyping or Google Hangout and texting. Some of the more traditional forms of communication have been a staple to the Arboretum's way of communication. In this sense, some staff members continue to adhere to traditional communication tools such as mail, phone/voicemail conversations and face-to-face conversations.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Is multi-or cross-generational communication in the workplace as big of a deal as it seems to be? Numerous studies have shown that there is a difference in communication among the generations, but, the ability to adapt to the different methods of communication may be the key to keeping a happy and mentally healthy workforce. W. Stanton Smith (2008) of Deloitte LLP., wrote an article titled “Decoding Generational Differences: Fact, fiction... or should we just get back to work?”

This title is very fitting for this research since the main topic is how preferences for workplace communication channels vary by generation. The article by Smith challenges the thinking that it is a generational divide. The article covers topics such as why it is important to get a deeper understanding of millennials (Gen y) and describes how their preference in communication is different from that of baby boomers. When attracting and maintaining millennials, Smith encourages a change in the mindset of supervisors and managers, asking them to engage millennials and baby boomers so they can enhance the learning experience of both generations. Smith states that millennials are able to be developed into an energized and positive part of the workforce.

The four generations in today's workforce are veterans (or matures), born before 1946, baby boomers, born between 1946 and 1964; generation X, born between 1965 and 1980 and millennials, born after 1980. The main concern Smith covers in his article is the use of technology among millennials and how it is affecting the workplace and its efficiency. The traditional office space is

evolving, making it easier for millennials to do their job from a coffee shop on a Saturday, but making it harder for matures or baby boomers to keep a close eye on productivity and efficiency.

In an article by Jennifer Deal (2007), the premise of a communication gap among generations is dismissed. She cites 10 myths and states that there are variations among generations, but for the most part, everyone is looking for the same thing. 1. All generations have similar values. 2. Everyone wants respect. 3. Trust matters. 4. People want leaders who are credible and trustworthy. 5. Organizational politics is a problem – no matter how old or young you are. 6. No one really likes change. 7. Loyalty depends on the context, not on the generation. 8. It's as easy to retain a young person as it is to retain an older one – if you do the right things. 9. Everyone wants to learn – more than just about anything else. 10. Almost everyone wants a coach. (Deal, 2007) The main focus of this article is on strong leadership. When weak leaders have strong teams, they begin to struggle to determine who has the power. They sometimes spend more time determining who has the power than getting work done.

Greg Hammill (2005), of Fairleigh Dickinson University, wrote an article called "Mixing and Managing Four Generations of Employees." This is the first time in history that there have been four generations employed at the same time in the workplace. He starts out quoting comments like: "You're right, but I'm the boss!" "Just do your job!" "I remember when..." "The kid wants a promotion after six months on the job!" These are all common quotes heard throughout the office today. He claims that each generation has distinct attitudes, behaviors,

expectations, habits and motivational buttons. The key is to unlock the mystery of those behaviors through researching underlying values and personal and lifestyle characteristics relative to each generation. Communication styles, reported by Hammill, are as follows.

Veterans (Matures) prefer a formal memo when communicating. Baby boomers prefer in-person or face-to-face conversation. Gen Xers prefer direct or immediate contact via face-to-face or technology. Millennials (Gen y) prefer email or voicemail communications. The different methods of motivation are as follows: Matures, Your experience is respected. Baby boomers, You are valued – You are needed. Gen X, Do it your way – forget the rules. Millennials, You will work with other bright, creative people (Hammill, 2005).

The Work and Family life ratio was broken down into: Veterans, Ne'er the twain shall meet; Baby boomers, No balance – Work to live. Gen X, Balance. Millennials, Balance (Hammill, 2005).

The author ends the article stating that “At the beginning of any team formation, an effective leader should consider spending time learning how team members wish to communicate” (Hammill, 2005. p.6).

Anick Tolbize is a renowned leader in cross-generational communications. Once employed by the University of Minnesota, he wrote training tools on how to understand generational differences in the workplace. He is quoted as saying, “Generational conflict is more likely to arise from errors of attribution and perception, than from valid differences. Therefore, effective communication is critical when dealing with generational conflict” (Tolbize, 2008, p.13).

Tolbize discusses how to keep employees satisfied with the communication among generations but doesn't touch on specific forms. The key concepts he iterates are: keeping everyone in the loop, making coaching/training the responsibility of management, and building credibility between managers and employees. This is a common theme throughout most of the research found on communication in the workplace.

The Hilson and Ennels (2009) article discussed the importance of sharing information across generations. The main focus of the study was to enhance the experience for all generations. The use of the "The Golden Link" model was described. The goal of the research was to see if the authors could determine a common communication tool that would cross all borders of culture, department and generation. The Golden Link model pairs an older employee with a younger employee. The older employee explains a process to the younger employee and that younger employee creates charts/graphs based on the information provided. Working as a team, the two generations are able to determine the best way to relay information to one another. This information could be crucial to determining the way Arboretum employees communicate. The benefit of using the efficiency of a younger employee's tech-savvy skills and pairing it with that of an older employee's knowledge and skill could be crucial to expanding the efficiency of the Arboretum's workforce.

Nancy Pekala (2009), describes in detail the history of each generation. In the chart (p. 35), Pekala breaks down the thought process behind some important generational differences. Technology: Matures, Technology changed

the landscape of the country. Baby boomers, The Microwave is great! Technology makes my life easier. Gen X, Technology is my computer that processes millions of bits of information instantly. Millennials, Technology lets me talk with the guy from Bangladesh. (Pekala, 2001)

Although these seem like generalized ways each generation sees technology, the importance of what is said is based on each generation's perception. Matures see the importance of technology but don't feel the need to embrace it. Baby boomers like technology because of the ease it brings to their life. It may not make them more apt to use it in the workplace but simple forms of it will be used at home. Gen X has an understanding and appreciation for technology. They try to find ways to use it to improve work efficiency and everyday functions. Millennials take it for granted. Not growing up without it, they don't know what it is like not to have everything at their fingertips.

An article by Lindsey Pollak, (2009) sums it up pretty well. She boils it down to the fact that communication is first and foremost about the other person. It's not about what would be easiest, fastest or least scary for you. If you want to get ahead at work, communicate in whatever way the other person prefers. She states...“that the ‘U’ comes before ‘I’ in communicate. If you want your message to be received, the best thing you can do is to present it in a way the listener wants to hear it.” (Pollak, 2009, p.2)

As the Arboretum continues to grow, there is some resistance from staff members to adjust their work and communication style to meet the needs of the changing climate...and in some instances, to place the customer or visitor at the

forefront to guide decision-making. Hence, there is a need for a phased employee communication initiative to evolve the workplace culture of the Arboretum. The increased focus on a positive visitor experience has reduced management's focus on maintaining a manageable workload for the staff. This has caused some employee resistance to change. Resistance could be reduced by introducing phases such as – leveraging face-to face interactions, team building and then introducing the modern concepts of communication channels.

The article by Pat Riley, "Creating a High Performance Team," gives examples of the proper steps to take when dealing with a multi-generational workforce that is in the midst of a workplace change. One of the obstacles at the Arboretum is that the current way of communicating is outdated. The Arboretum has seen many changes in the past decade. The staff may have been more open to the changes if they would have had input. Some of the most recent changes involve the addition of a large Oswald Visitor Center. (The Arboretum previously had only one visitor center, the Snyder Building. It was a complex that housed a small staff and information center.) The updated, much larger Visitor Center is more functional and is able to handle the increased visitor traffic. Some staff members were resistant to the change because of the negative imprint a larger building would have on neighboring gardens.

The old ways of communicating needed to be updated also in order to maintain efficiency, but the balance hasn't been found yet. In the article, Riley states that the seven intangibles people want in the workplace are: appreciation, respect, trust, individual growth, a good boss, compatible co-workers and a

sense of purpose. These were similar to indicators mentioned in Tolbiz's article above but they are more specific and, similar to Tolbiz's definition, they are cross-generational. Riley also points out that the communication channels used to broadcast and manage the expectations of the seven intangibles are: team meetings, one-on-ones, and broadcast status notes. He believes that all of these platforms should be used simultaneously; taking the extra steps to ensure that each generation is getting the information in a format they understand and are retaining the information. It may sound like a time-consuming practice, but in the end, the ability to communicate effectively and maintain open channels of communication would prove to be invaluable.

The article by Neil Simmons, "Leveraging Generational Work Styles to Meet Business Objectives," shares insight into the overlap and mentoring practices of the generations. Simmons also discusses the communication channels' current state of flux. He believes that the dynamics of communication are changing. This flux comes at a time when the generational landscape is changing also. Technology is a key source for doing business and delivering services (Simmons, 2011). Simmons states, "All three generations embrace technology to increase workplace efficiency. However, employers must be aware that millennial digital natives may grow impatient with the applications that are the lifeblood of many corporations... Finding ways for these systems to provide the value these workers anticipate and expect within their terms – unified, electronic, and mobile – will enable and encourage them to participate more fully in the organization"(p.32). It is difficult to say whether or not the communication

gap needs more or less technology, but the article specifically targets the increased usage of social media by millennials. The positive impact gen Xers have as mentors to millennials has improved the usage of this form of media, but the usage by the baby boomer generation still has yet to be explored by Simmons.

Joyce A. Hahn, (2011) published the article, "Managing Multiple Generations: Scenarios From the Workplace." The article focuses on problems among generations with a specific focus on communications. The findings published were that communication and respect are the underlying key strategies to understanding and bridging the generational gap in the workplace (Hahn, 2011). Hahn discusses the ACORN model and its five precepts (Xemeke et al., 2000, pp. 156-158). These operational ideas are used to help a company grow "oak-strong." The use of these precepts helps to create a work environment that is supportive of multiple generations.

1. Accommodate employee differences by treating employees like internal customers. Get to know who they are and what they like. Meet their specific needs which, in turn, will create a friendlier workplace.
2. Create workplace choices by removing the links in the chain of command and by reducing the amount of bureaucracy in the workplace. Communications could be varied by generations, while still being focused on message.
3. Operate from a sophisticated management style by providing an overall goal for the workplace and allowing employees the opportunity to work together to get it done. Give frequent rewards and recognition to motivate staff to do their best.
4. Respect

competence and initiative by assuming the best from your employees. Treat all employees like they have great things to offer – from new staff to seasoned staff. Motivate them to help them perform at their best. 5. Nourish retention by creating the opportunity for lateral moves around the company. It broadens assignments and utilizes the staff's best skills (Hahn, 2011).

Table 2. Multigenerational Cohort Backgrounds

Generations	Generational core values	Generational styles	Generational events
Veterans <1945	Hard work Dedicated Respect for authority Uncomfortable with conflict Accepts delayed reward	Stable Reliable Practical Loyal	The Great Depression Pearl Harbor World War II Age of the Silver Screen
Baby Boomers 1946–1964	Strong sense of duty Team player Personal gratification Uncomfortable with conflict Immediate gratification and reward	Involvement Personal growth Optimism Mentors	Civil rights President Kennedy, Robert Kennedy and Dr. King assassinations Vietnam War Woodstock First lunar landing
Generation X 1965–1976	Self-directed Self-reliant Work and play balance Diversity Action rather than words Individual positive feedback	Think globally Technoliteracy Pragmatic Asynchronous communication Skeptical	Resignation of President Nixon Watergate scandal Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome epidemic Three Mile Island disaster
Millennials 1977–1997	Optimism Diversity Ambitious Can-do attitude Flexible 24-hr workplace Attentive rewards	Multitasking Technologically savvy Outcome driven Determined	Columbine shootings Oklahoma City bombing Gulf War Global war on terrorism

Source: Stewart, D. W. (2006) and Zemke, R., Raines, C. & Filipczak (2000).

1. **Accommodate Employee Difference** – Social media has increasingly become a major form of communication at the Arboretum. Generation Xers and millennials are most comfortable with the concept of social media. The Arboretum currently contracts the posting responsibility to a firm that is aware of the trends in social media posting and consumption. The idea of creating a dialogue with the audience is foreign to some of the baby boomers and matures

generations at the Arboretum. The former way of pushing the message to the group seems to creep back into play on occasion. Issues faced were that the firm would post more conversational items such as, “What is your favorite garden?” and fans would post comments immediately. Staff members of the baby boomer/mature generations would post items such as, “Garden tour at the Arboretum this weekend. Register today!” This forced message or sales message was receiving negative feedback from the fans.

2. **Create Workplace Choices** – Facebook is currently the Arboretum’s main social media channel. Initially, numerous Arboretum employees had administration rights which gave them the ability to post comments on Facebook. This caused issues because multiple Arboretum employees were posting numerous times a day. The posts were inconsistent with current best practices. The posts were intrinsically ad-focused which distanced the reader instead of being dialogue-focused which engaged the reader. The marketing team revoked all but three admin posting rights and reinstated the best practices of dialogue-focused postings.

3. **Operate from a Sophisticated Management Style** – The marketing supervisor was able to discuss the reason for the changes to the social media strategy because of feedback provided by the firm. The strategic plan and open dialogue concept was relayed to all generations involved across all departments. The plan was introduced with specific goals in mind and the increase in Likes created support for the plan.

4. **Respect Competence and Initiative** – Arboretum grounds employees are very passionate about their work contribution. Each has a specific garden or part of the grounds they work in. The departments of the Arboretum are continually launching creative educational programming or opening new areas for facility rental purposes. That said, there are ways to increase awareness of the new initiatives and social media is one of those methods, but without a strategic communications plan in place, the channel gets jumbled and it decreases the chance that any message from the Arboretum will be heard.

5. **Nourish Retention** – All of the previous parts to the ACORN model listed will help in the retention of employees. Giving them input, setting specific goals, giving them the opportunity to grow with the organization and giving them a voice will help to maintain and sustain employment at the Arboretum.

Bruce K. Berger (2008) noted similar issues and opportunities involving internal communications. He noted the importance of using multiple forms of communication media to ensure a more efficient workplace. Berger also notes that the communication models are always changing and will continue to do so. Berger breaks the communication networks down into two forms. Formal communication which consists of memos, newsletters, etc., are used to show an organization's hierarchy. Informal communication is the second form. Informal communication consists of rumors, the grapevine and electronic forms of relaying messages. Formal communication has a vertical or top-down approach which also enforces the hierarchical use of the tool. Horizontal communication best relates to informal communication. Berger discusses the less formal methods of

communication as more authentic. One extremely interesting and concluding message Berger sends is that the most used channel of communication is listening (Harris and Nelson, 2008). This consumes about half of our time (Johnson, 1996). Berger states that “effective listening is crucial to learning, understanding, conflict resolution and productive team work. It helps leaders at all levels improve employee morale, retain employees and uncover and resolve problems” (Berger, 2008, p.4)

METHODS & DATA COLLECTION:

The research questions posed are:

How do cross-generational employees shape supervisor/leadership styles?

What is the most effective way to communicate with multiple generations in the workplace?

SURVEY PROCEDURE:

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) process was completed before any University of Minnesota employee took the online or intensive survey. The IRB forms were submitted and the project was deemed exempt (Appendix A).

Surveys were printed and handed out to the Arboretum staff at the all-staff meeting on May 1, 2013, just after IRB approval came through. A survey for Arboretum staff was created to answer the research questions above (Appendix B).

Hard copies of the Arboretum Staff survey were printed and presented to the staff at the meeting. A presentation was given discussing the confidentiality of the survey along with the other restrictions of the IRB. The Arboretum employs 232 people; approximately 90 attended the meeting. Of those 90 attendees, 61 completed the survey.

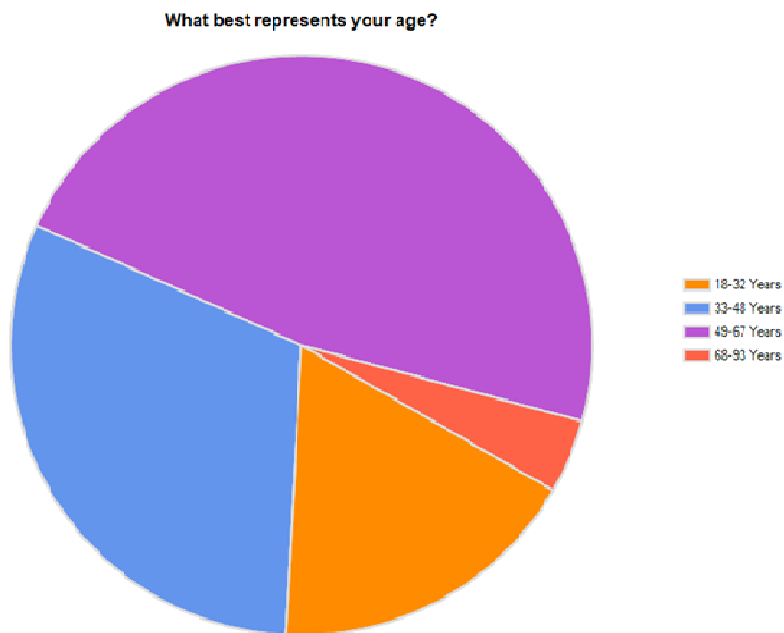
The same survey was offered online and sent to the staff using the Arboretum's "Arb-2All" email address. The handwritten surveys were manually added to the online survey in addition to the 36 new surveys taken online. A total of 97 surveys were taken as of May 8, 2013 (Appendix B).

Intensive interviews were scheduled with six Arboretum supervisors. All interviews were completed by May 8, 2013 (Appendix C). A focus group consisting of seven Arboretum employees and supervisors was conducted on May 10, 2013. The focus group was scheduled for 60 minutes and stayed within that timeframe (Appendix D).

QUANTITATIVE SURVEY RESULTS:

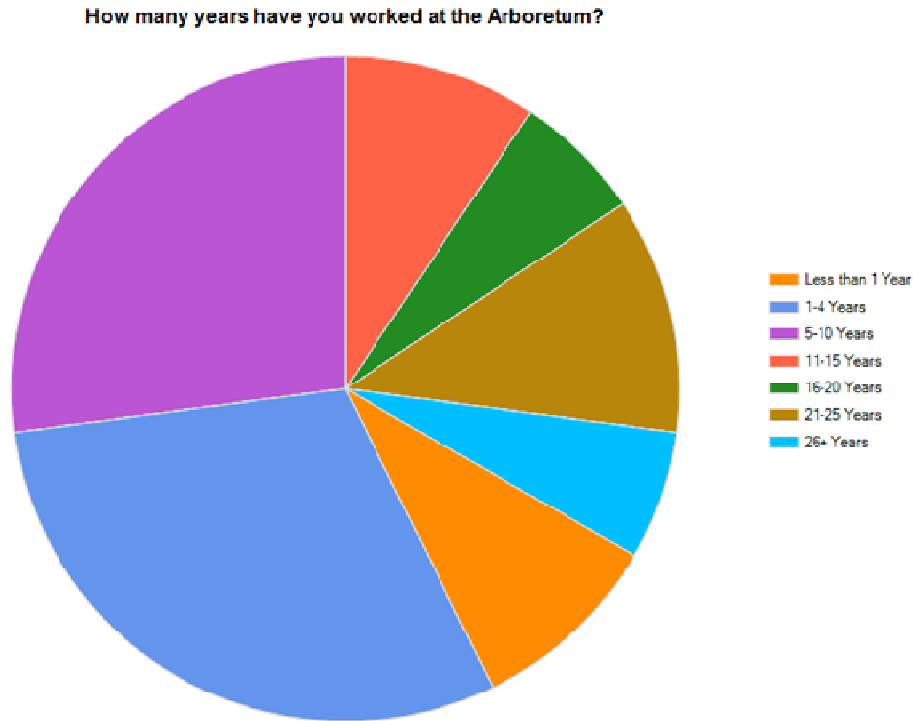
To get a general sense of where the employee fit into the generational scale, the question – “What best represents your age?” was asked

18-32 years (millennial), 33-48 years (gen X), 49-67 years (baby boomers), 68-93 years (matures) the largest group of employees to take the survey were baby boomers at 47.4 percent. The median age for an Arboretum employee falls within the 49-67 year old range. The percentage of females that took the survey was 70.8 and males were 29.2 percent.



When asked how many years the respondent has worked at the Arboretum, the results showed 10 percent was less than one year, 30.2 percent was one to four years. The second highest answer at 27.1 percent is 5-10 years. 9.4 percent is 11-15 years, 6.3 percent is 16-20 years, and 21-25 years was 11.5 percent and

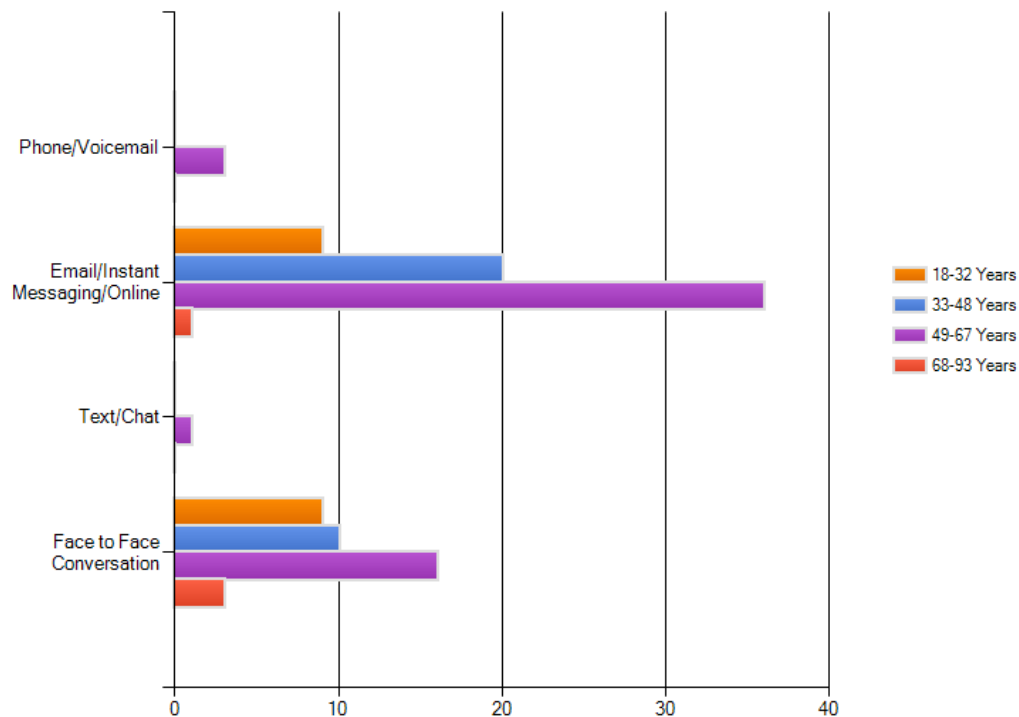
26 + years was 6 percent. Longevity at the Arboretum is very common.



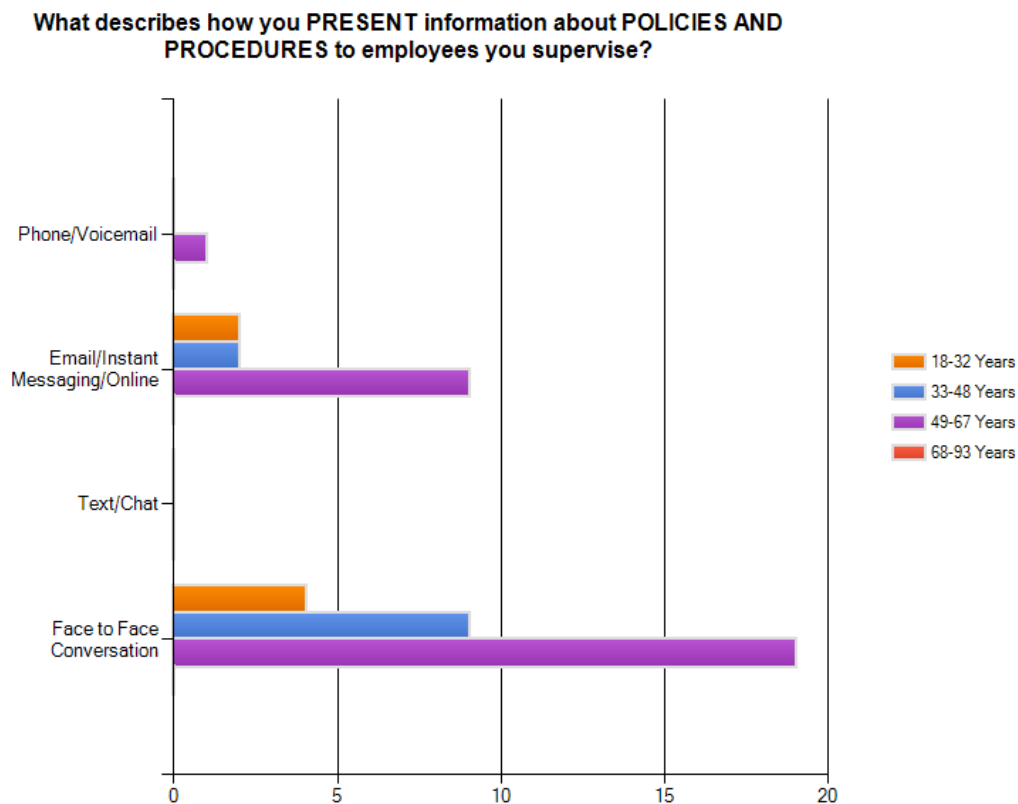
The third question – “What best describes responsibilities in your current job?” 22.4 percent of respondents are Garden Crew, 11.8 percent are Building Crew, 36.5 percent are Support Staff, 9.4 percent are Supervisors, 12.9 are Managers, 1.2 percent are Directors and 5.9 percent are Front Line Staff.

Now that the basics of the respondents’ information were gathered, the survey transitioned into the communication preferences of the employee. When receiving information about job policies and procedures, Email/instant messaging/online was the most preferred form of communication, at 69.5 percent, followed by face-to-face conversation.

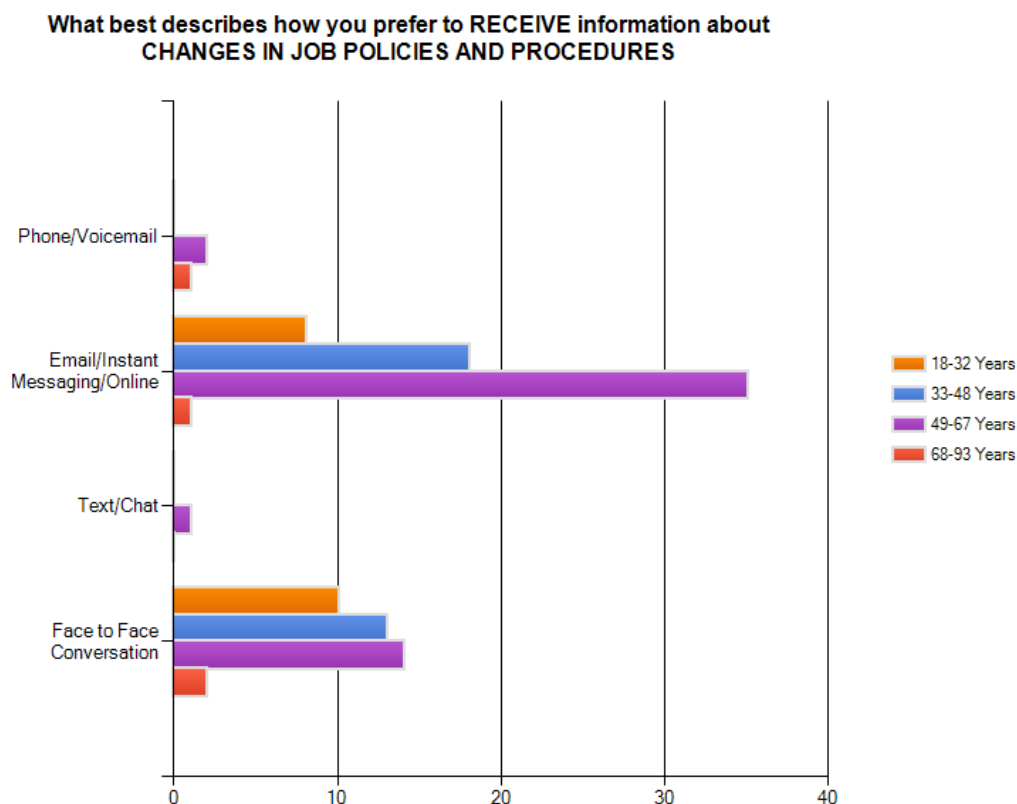
What best describes how you prefer to RECEIVE information about JOB POLICIES AND PROCEDURES



Although the preference for receiving policy and procedural communications from employees was Email/Instant Messaging/Online, the survey showed that most supervisors were not communicating to the employee the way they preferred. The chart below shows that Face to Face communication was the preference by supervisors when relaying job policies and procedures to employees.

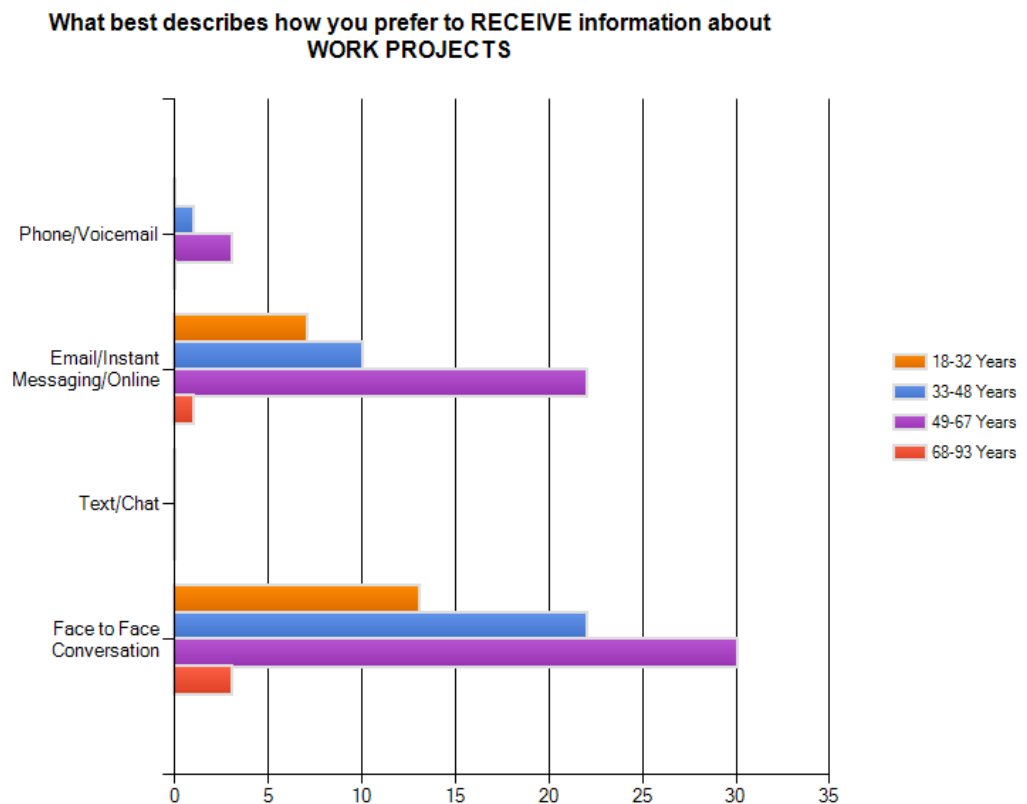


When asked how the respondent preferred to receive information about job changes from their supervisor, they said via Email/instant messaging/online (66 percent) and second was face-to-face conversation.

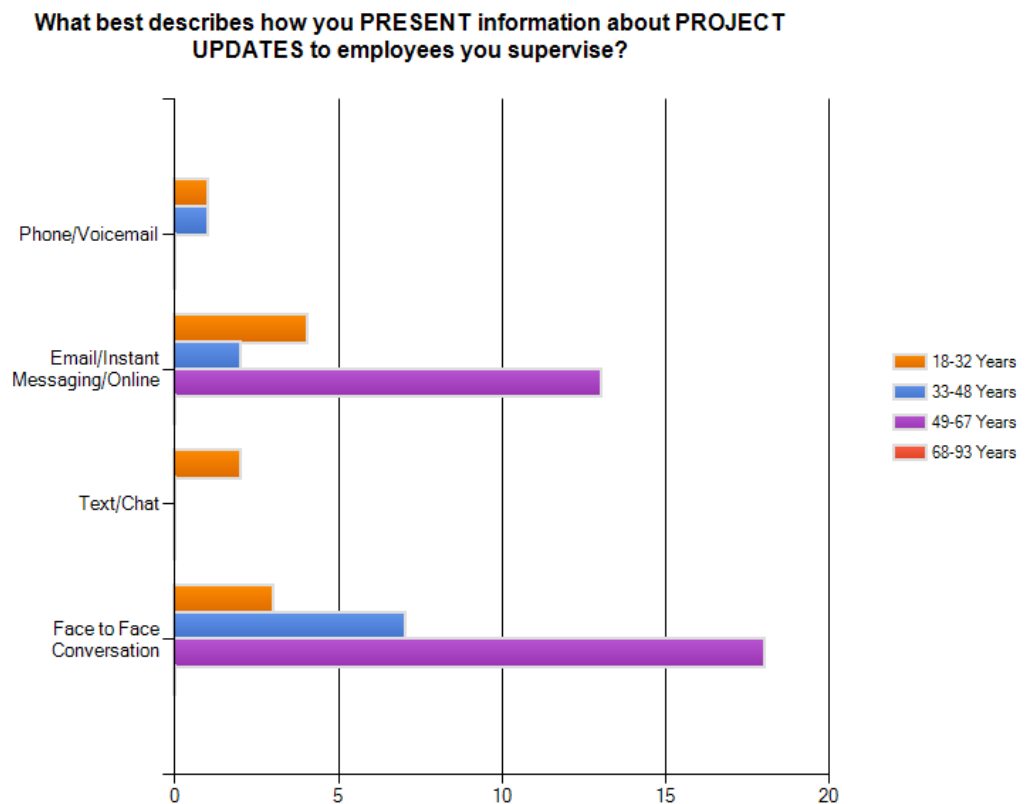


The graph below shows a breakdown according to generations. The chart shows that the 49-67 age group has the highest preference of receiving email/instant message/online interaction when getting information about changes in work policy or procedures.

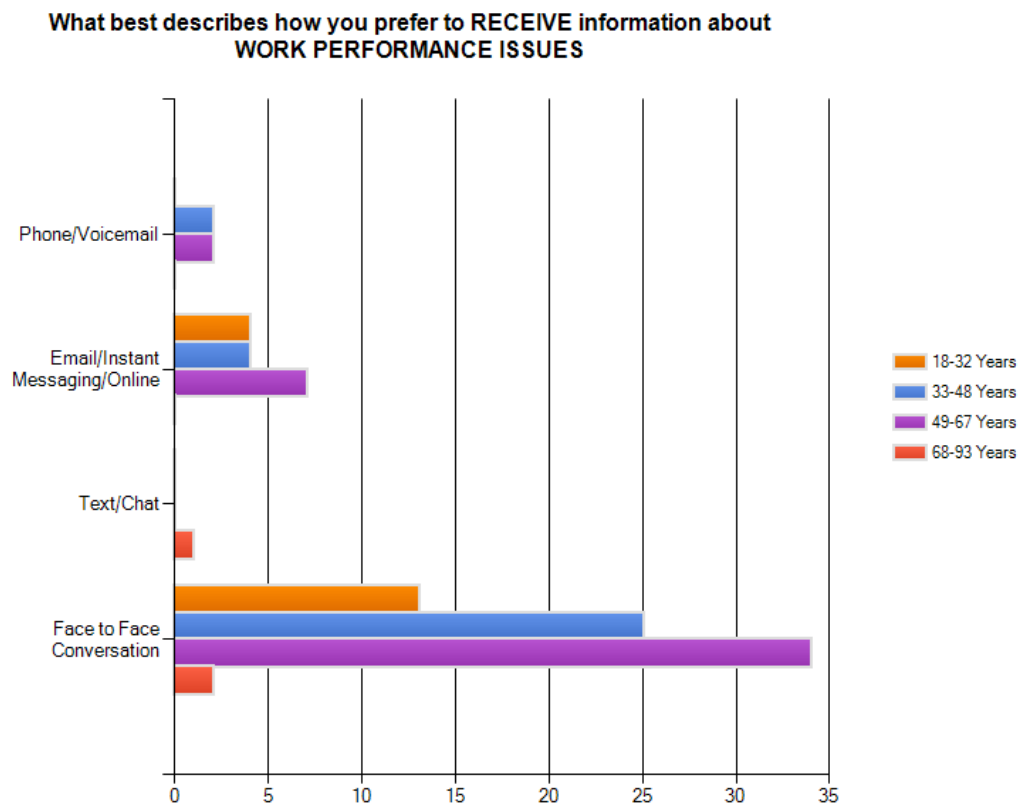
When asked what best describes how they prefer to receive information about work projects, face-to-face conversation at 73.1 percent was the most commonly chosen answer, while email/instant messaging/online was second.



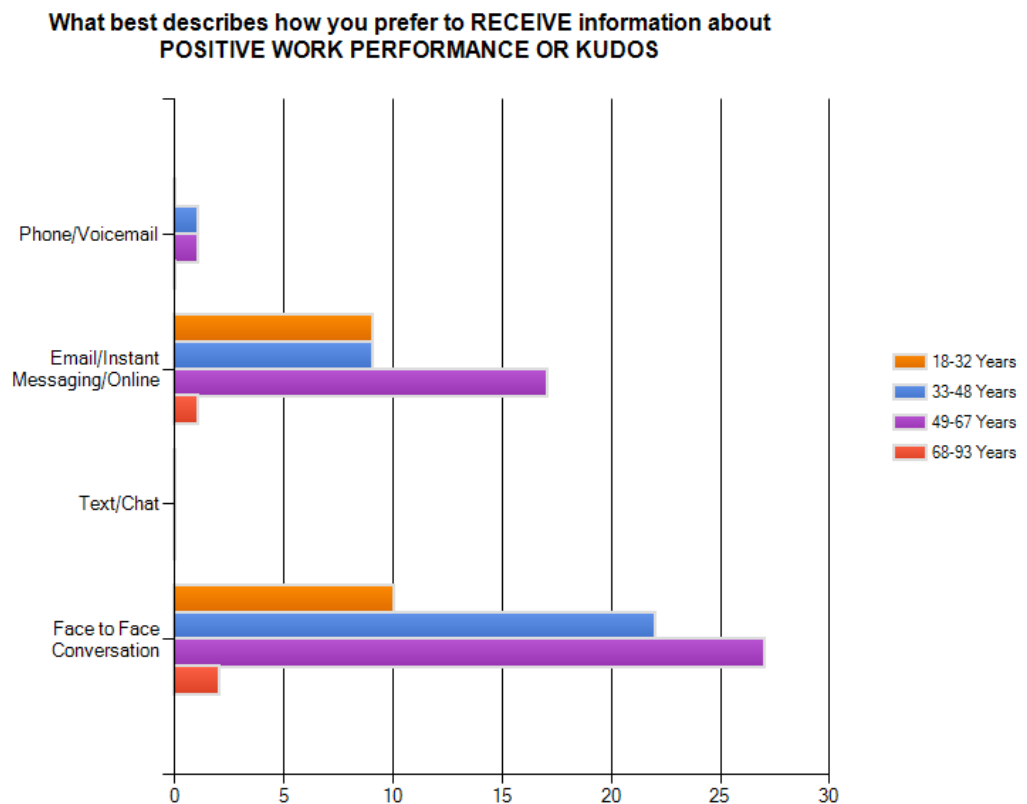
When asked how they prefer to receive information about changes in projects, face-to-face conversation was most commonly used at 61.5 percent followed by email/instant messaging/online.



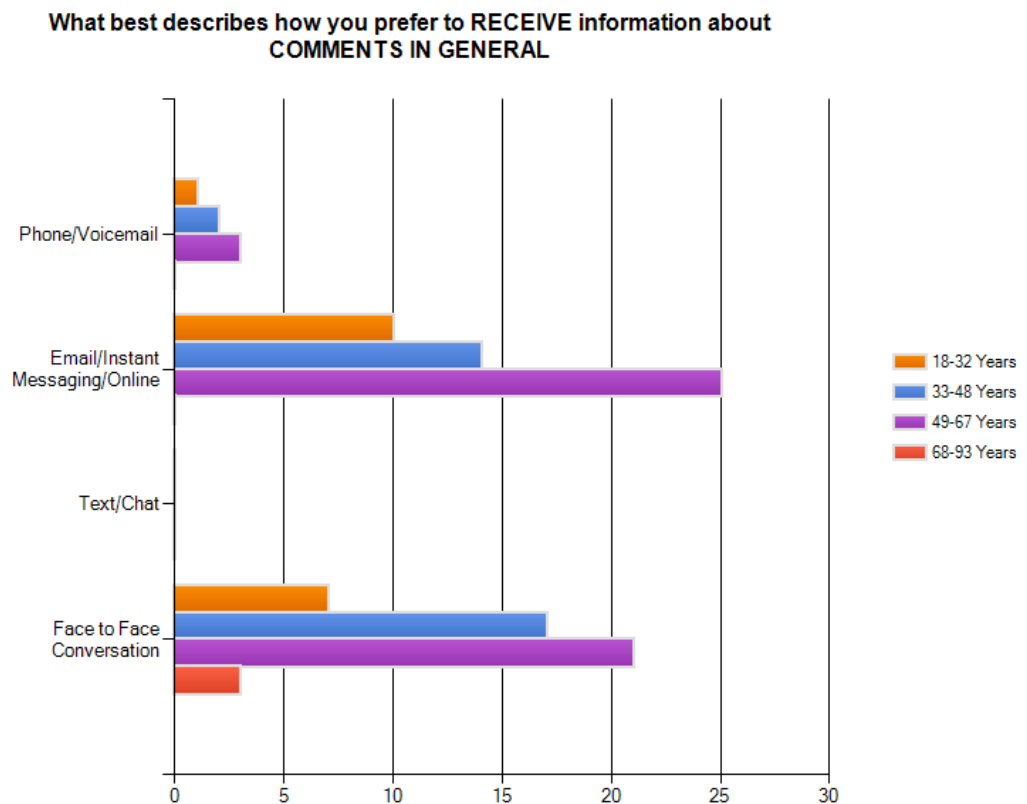
When asked what best describes how they prefer to receive information about work performance issues, face-to-face conversation was highest at 83.1 percent.



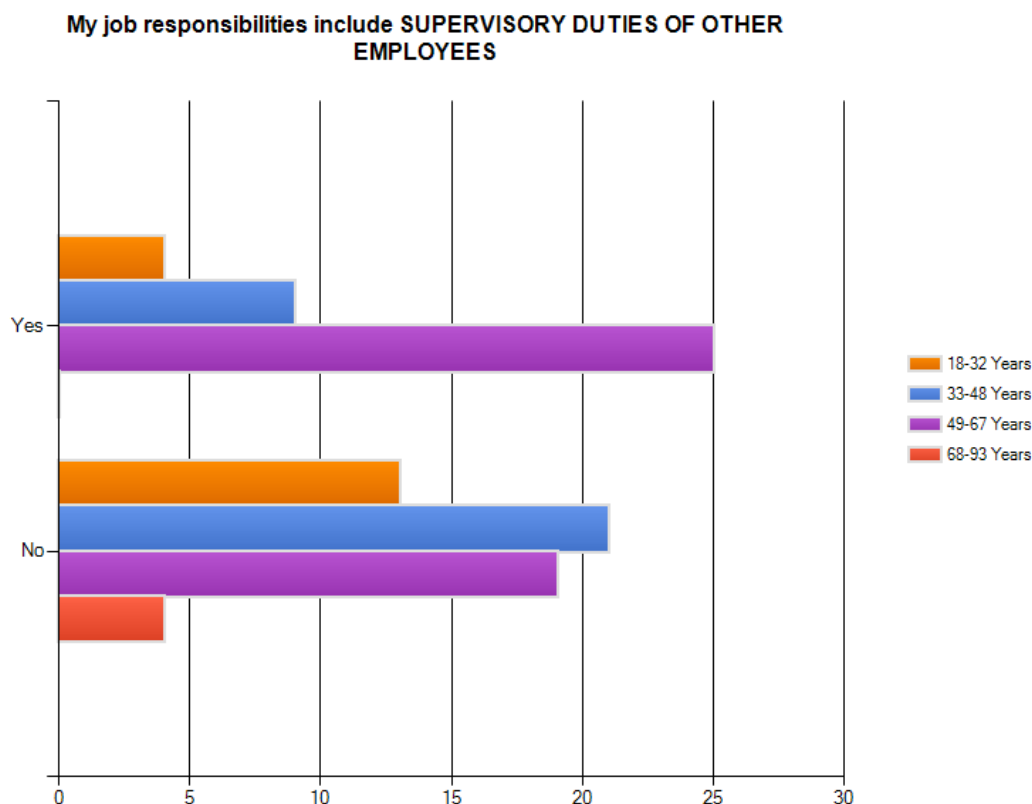
Face-to-face conversation was also highest (70.9 percent) when receiving feedback on positive work performance.



When receiving comments in general, the respondents were fairly split between face-to-face conversation (52.2 percent) and email/instant messaging/online (53.3 percent).



Respondents then answered whether or not their job involved supervisory duties. Of those surveyed, 60 percent said no and 40 percent said yes.



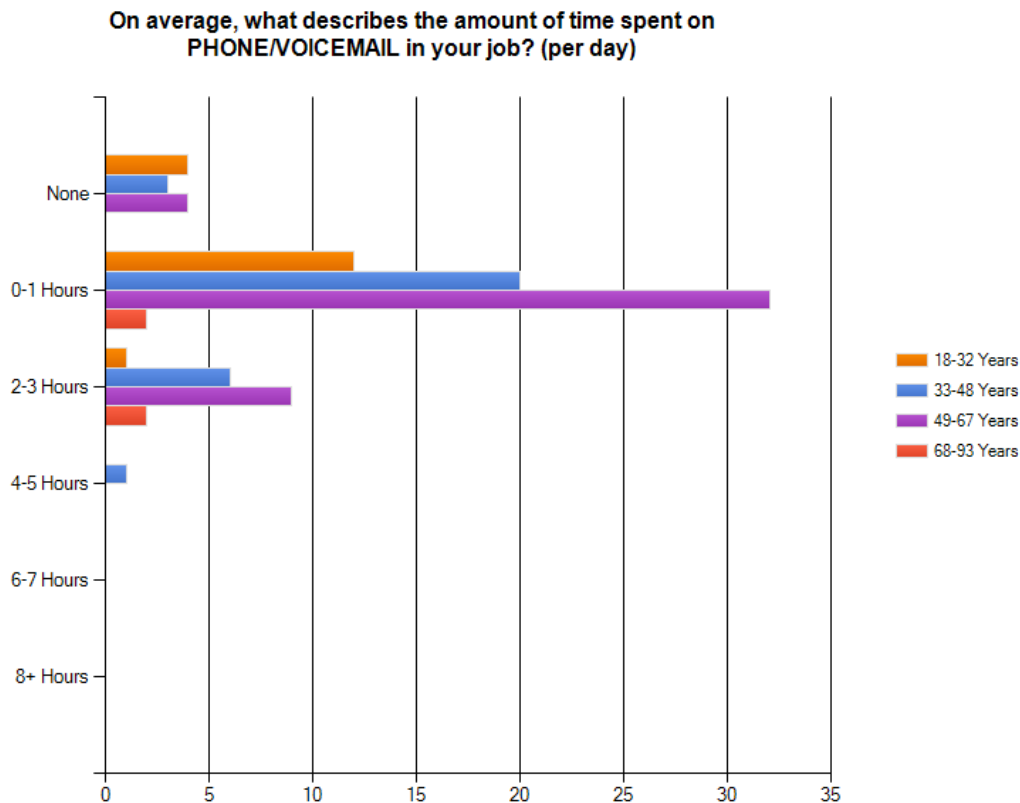
When those who said yes to having a supervisory role were asked how they present information about policies and procedures, 80 percent said they use face-to-face conversation. When asked how they present changes in policies and procedures, 73.2 percent said they use face-to-face conversation.

For those that answered yes to being in a supervisory role, when asked what best describes how they present information about new projects to employees, they responded with face-to-face conversation at 83.3 percent.

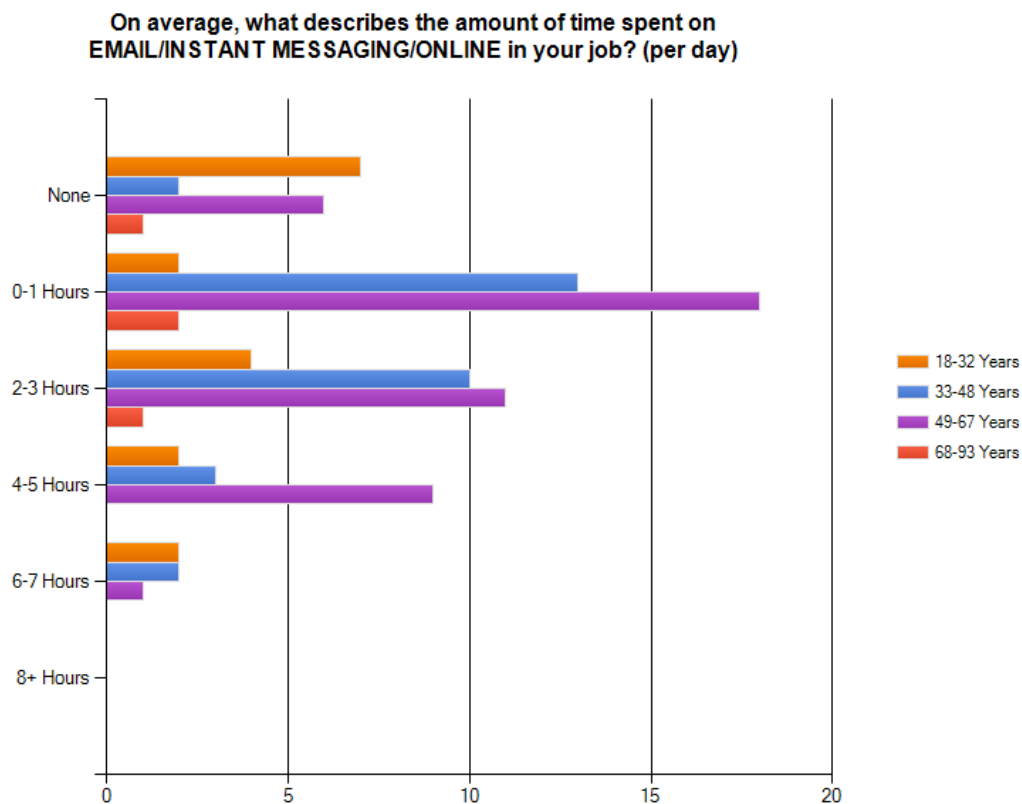
When giving project updates to employees, supervisors say face-to-face conversation is 66.7 percent. If having to discuss work performance issues with an employee, supervisors mostly use face-to-face conversation at 94.4 percent.

When sharing positive performance feedback or kudos, 81.6 percent of supervisors prefer face-to-face conversation. When asked how they generally prefer to share information about comments or workplace concerns, face-to-face conversation was again a preferred method at 75 percent.

General questions were asked to the entire group about time spent using the following methods. On average, when asked, what describes the amount of time spent on phone/Voicemail in your job? (Per day) 0-1 hours was the highest rated answer at 68.8 percent.

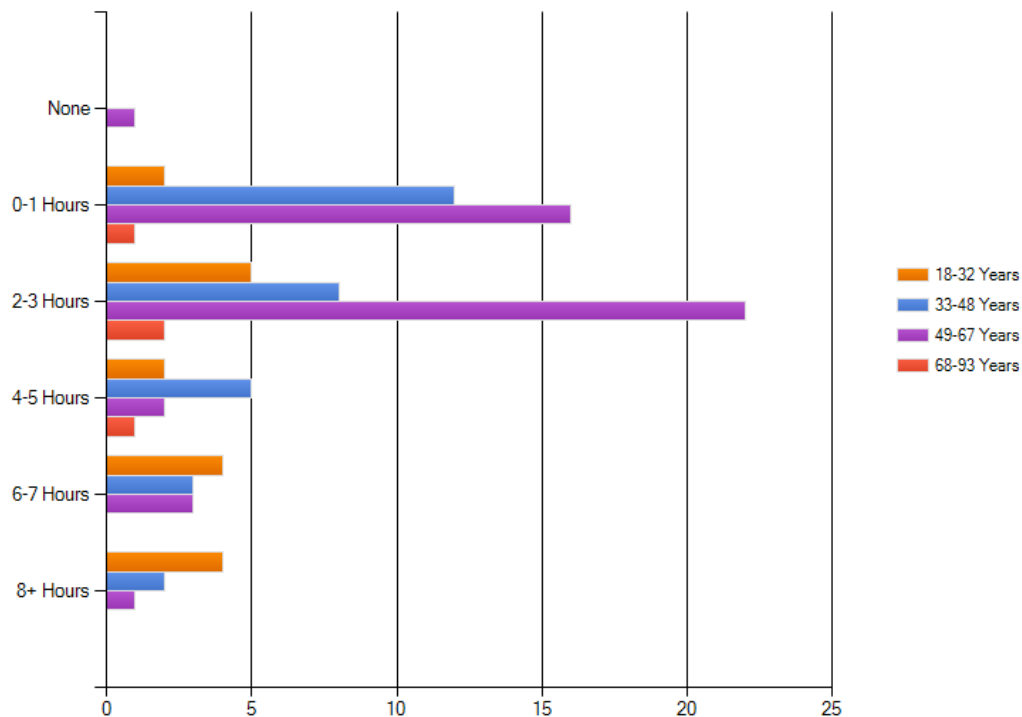


When asked how much time was spent on email/instant messaging/online, 0-1 hours was the highest answer at 36.5 percent.

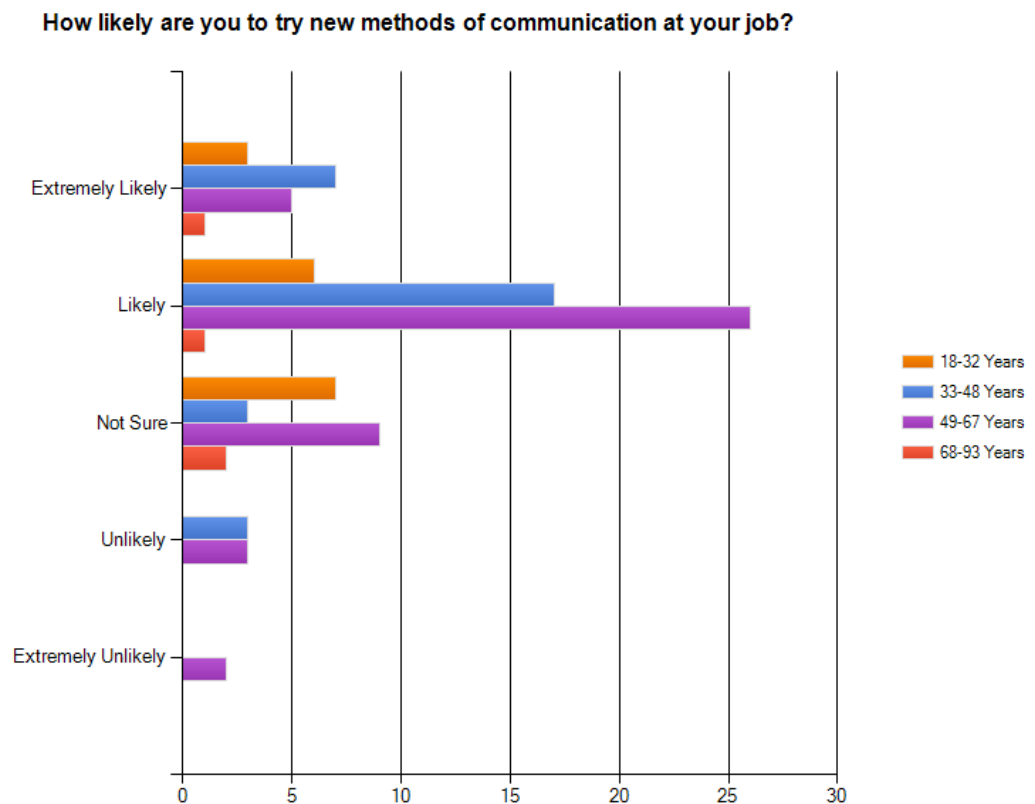


Text messaging was the least preferred method of communication with none being the highest answer at 74.7 percent. Face-to-face conversation was highest at 2-3 hours at 38.5 percent.

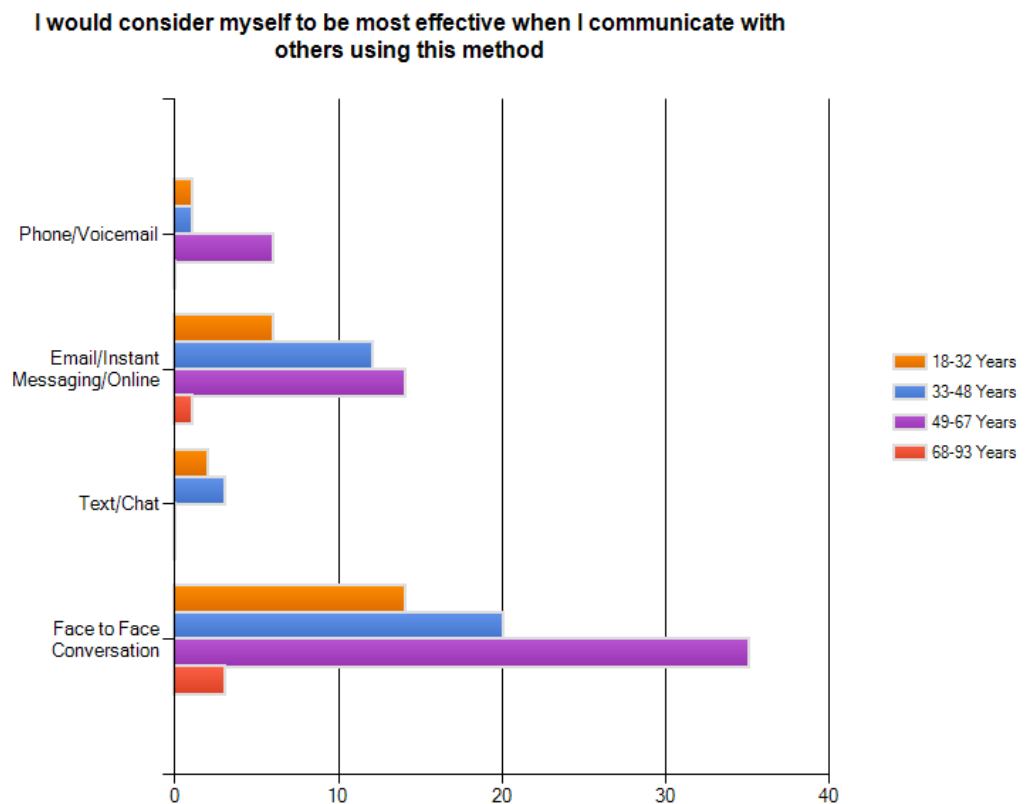
On average, what describes the amount of time spent in FACE TO FACE CONVERSATION in your job? (per day)



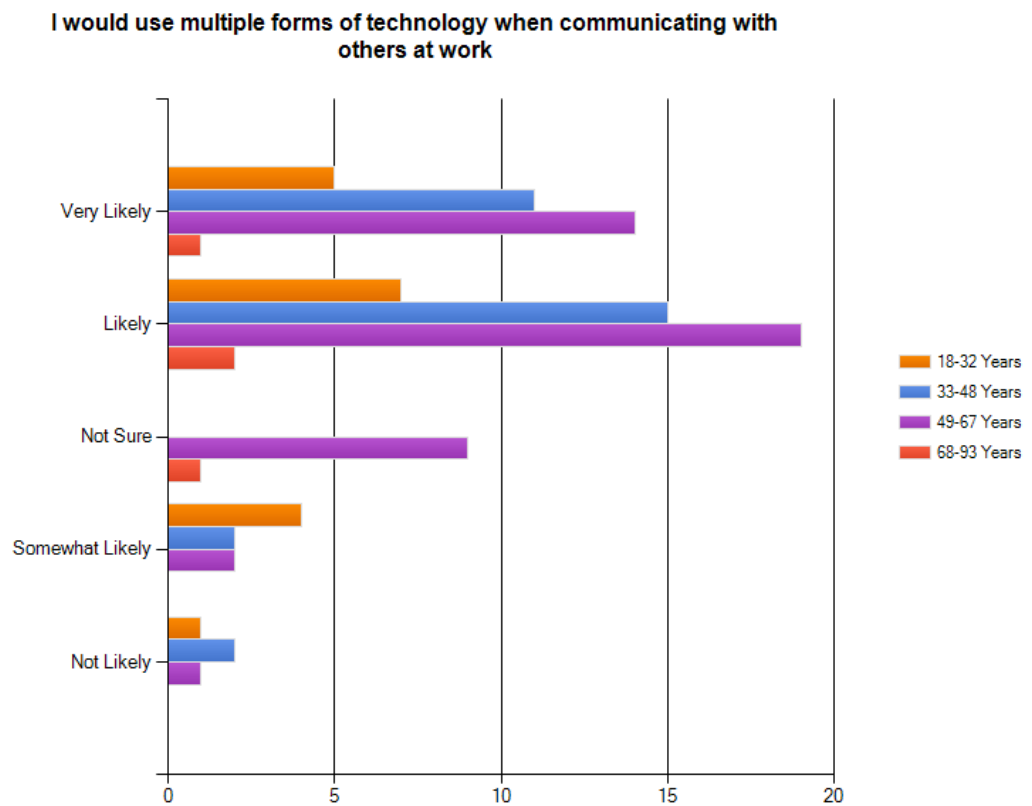
When asked how likely the respondent was to try new methods of communication at their job, 52.6 percent said they were likely to try new methods.



When respondents were asked if they felt they were technology savvy, 33 percent that they were. The highest number of respondents said face-to-face communications (75.8 percent) was their most effective way to communicate.



When asked if they would use multiple forms of communicating at work, 44.8 percent said it was likely they would.



When asked if they currently use the Arboretum's Intranet as a resource, 69.8 percent said they do.

INTENSIVE INTERVIEWS:

Six intensive interviews were conducted to determine how cross-generational employees shape/define supervisor roles. A standard list of eight questions was given to all respondents.

Respondents all had supervisory duties over employees at various age ranges and manage anywhere from 2-53 employees. When asked if they supervised employees who were younger or older than themselves, the majority said they were both younger and older.

When asked if it was possible to personalize their methods of communication for each person they supervise, the answers varied. Most of the comments were related to working together as a team. Sharing face-to-face conversations was most important to getting the word across. Many found that face-to-face conversation was the most effective way to communicate because of the ability to see facial cues. Facial cues are a form of media richness. (Media richness is the determination of how the content of a conversation is relayed and understood.) Computer-mediated communication (CMC) and face-to-face communication (FTF) pros and cons are explained by David S. Kerr and Udday S. Murthy (2009). Both CMC and FTF have an important role in multi-generational communication. Kerr and Murthy (2009) have determined that there are four factors to influence media richness. 1. The ability to transmit multiple cues (e.g., voice and facial gestures) 2. Immediacy of feedback 3. Language variety and 4. Personal focus. Although FTF is the richest form of media because of the influences mentioned, CMC does have its place in the media richness realm.

Parallel communication is a viable form of communication when the message being sent is that of a low task equivocality (Kerr, Murthy, 2008). Face-to-face communication was preferred by supervisors because it provided them the ability to see that their staff was actually understanding and actively receiving the information. It also gave the supervisor the opportunity to explain in more detail to those that needed it.

One respondent said that face-to-face is preferred, but a follow-up email is necessary to ensure the communication was documented. It was a general consensus that because of the number of staff under their supervision, it was not possible to target specific communication to each employee.

When asked which of the following methods was their preferred form of communication, three respondents preferred face-to-face conversation, two preferred Email/instant messaging/online and one preferred Phone/Voicemail.

When asked what they felt they could do to improve communications with their staff, the responses were as follows –

Ask more questions, be a better coach, breakdown comes from a misunderstood written message, take the time to be pro-active regarding needs and expectations – through meetings and delegations. Be more prepared myself, always flying by the seat of my pants.

When asked what they felt their staff could do to improve communications, they said – Understand that I do not point fingers or lay blame. Bring the problem to me and help me come up with a way to solve it. They could pay attention in

morning meetings and ask questions if something isn't clear. Ask more questions.

Reiterate an open door policy – always ask questions.

Lastly, when asked if they felt that communication needs varied among generations, they said –

Interviewee 1 said, “Yes, I can get the attention of older employees easier or they seem to pay more attention because they are a loyal employee, an engaged staff member, and not just there for a paycheck. The younger staff are texting or chatting with each other. They look like they would rather be napping.”

Interviewee 2 said, “Yes and No – I think communication needs vary not so much based on generations but on the individual personality. I believe you need to understand your employee's motivation for working at your organization and foster an environment that gives them the best atmosphere to achieve their goals both personally and professionally while balancing the needs of the organization.”

Interviewee 3 said, “I think it can if employees don't realize there is a difference between how generations or specific people prefer to communicate.”

Interviewee 4 said, “I do believe communication between multiple generations does have an effect on employee performance.”

Interviewee 5 said, “I think that sometimes younger people think they know it all. Older employees have the experience and know what works and what doesn't work. It is important to bring staff together so ideas or problems can be talked about and come to an overall solution.”

Interviewee 6 said, “A concern within our organization – with some understanding electronic communication while others don’t or don’t want to understand it. Therefore – meetings...meetings...meetings...meetings.

FOCUS GROUP:

A focus group of seven Arboretum staff members consisting of two managers, three supervisors, one front line staff member and one garden crew member, along with myself as the moderator, was conducted on May 10, 2013. The participants were given an IRB confidentiality sheet and also recited the confidentiality statement before proceeding with the discussion. The focus group was told the length of time for the discussion was 60 minutes. The focus group completed discussion in 55 minutes and departed. The discussion was recorded and transcribed by the moderator. Some of the key findings that inform the hypothesis and research questions follow:

The Arboretum intranet is an employee portal that provides access to employee work documents, contact information, organization charts, etc. When asked if the group used the Arboretum's Intranet as a resource, most of them responded yes. They used it mainly as a portal to checking their email. Using it for different objectives came into question but aside from the email portal, many used it as a resource for human resource documents.

The current way most staff members use to communicate to the entire staff is through an "Arb2All" email. This is an email list consisting of all 230 Arboretum employees, trustees and CFANS colleagues. It was mentioned by group members that one of the issues with using this form of communication is that they have difficulty wading through all the emails to get necessary and important information. There are various uses for the Arb2All, so employees may get inundated by the amount of emails they get on a daily basis.

Arboretum intranet viability could be improved as it currently is under-utilized. The group acknowledged that face-to-face communication is the most widely used form of communication at the Arboretum. Email is second and is used when a reminder or documentation of a conversation is necessary. It was mentioned that email serves as a tracker for information and face-to-face conversation serves as an easier way for groups to share internal and external communications.

When asked what are the positives about the current communication system – the comment was – Is there a system? There was no positive input about the current Arb2All system. At the all-staff meetings, many staff members are tuned out for the important messages. If those important messages aren't repeated, they are lost. Also, not everyone is on the Arb2All system. The grounds crew shares two computers among 50 people.

The concept of using monitors to scroll policies and procedures, mirroring the intranet was discussed; the positive was that the group could see the intranet from their satellite locations but might need too much time to watch information scroll. Adjustments were suggested and the concept was considered by the group. The overall findings of the group was that previous and current communication channels need to be updated in order to increase efficiency. This would be done by increasing computers for garden staff, purchasing iPads for their vehicles, increasing Wi-Fi availability throughout the grounds, etc.

BEST PRACTICES:

The findings support the hypothesis in that preferences for workplace communication channels vary by generation. The type of information being received or given also has influence on which generation prefers a specific type of communication.

Based on the research, most employees prefer email/instant messaging/online communications when receiving information about job policies and procedures. The findings show that currently supervisors prefer to share information via face-to-face conversation. Communication could be improved if the media channels were changed to focus on email/instant messaging/online forms of communication.

Employees also showed a preference of email/instant messaging/online when receiving information about changes in job policies and procedures, the preferred method by employees would be to get the information via Email/instant messaging/online. This is because they have an electronic backup of the information and can store the data for future reference. Again, supervisors are mostly sharing this information via face-to-face conversation.

When a new employee receives information about new work projects, they prefer face-to-face communication. This is because of the ability to ask questions or clarify any gray areas. Research has shown that supervisors are sharing this information in the preferred face-to-face form of communication.

Just as employees preferred face-to-face communication for new projects, they also prefer face-to-face communication when supervisors are asking them

to change the scope of a project. Again, supervisors are asking for changes via face-to-face communication so the process is running smoothly.

The method preferred by employees for receiving information about work performance issues is face-to-face communication. Supervisors are currently sharing most work performance issues information via face-to-face communication. Some supervisors are following the conversation with an email so the documentation is available if employees relapse or continue to repeat the behavior.

When receiving information about positive work performance or kudos, employees prefer face-to-face communication. Supervisors are currently sharing most positive work performance or kudos information via face-to-face communication. Sometimes, especially at the Arboretum, emails are sent to the management and kudos are given at the monthly staff meetings.

When getting general comments or sharing general information, employees would rather get the information via email/instant messaging/online. As with many of the other situations, supervisors are currently sharing general information via face-to-face communication. There may need to be a shift in employee/supervisor communication to ensure efficiency when relaying general information.

Supervisors felt that compiling general information, such as event, program, logistical or seasonal trends, into one system could help make the retrieval of information more efficient. The supervisor could then relay the information for those who aren't tech-savvy by giving them the information via

face-to-face communication. The update of the current intranet could assist in making the compilation of information easier for the supervisors to disseminate. The findings support that the communication methods preferred by the varied levels of multi-generational employees does have an effect on the way a supervisor shapes his or her supervisor/leadership style.

Codes could also be assigned to different types of information. This would help raise awareness when determining what channels employees prefer to receive their information through. An example would be – for a new policy, the code would be NP-E (meaning New Policy – Email preference). The chart below shows an example of how the majority of the group overall prefers to be communicated to about certain types of issues, procedures, projects, etc.

The survey, interviews and focus group research supports the findings that the most effective way to communicate with multiple generations in the workplace is to use specific forms of media (see graph below) to target each of the employee groups. Target generations have multiple preferred channels based on the information being relayed. So the hypotheses that preferences for workplace communication channels vary by generation is supported by the research findings.

PREFERRED METHODS OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Communication Channel	Types of communications						
	Job Policies and Procedures	Changes in Job Policies & Procedures	Work Project	Changes in Work Project	Work Performance Issues	Positive Work Performance or Kudos	Comments in General BOTH FORMS
	Phone/Voicemail						
	Email/instant messaging/online	X	X				X
	Text/Chat						
	Face-to-face Conversation			X	X	X	X

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS:

The Arboretum staff survey was limited in generational variance due to the classification of employees at the Arboretum. The highest number of employees surveyed fell within the baby boomer classification. Out of the 230 employees at the Arboretum, 97 took the survey.

A minority of staff members are not computer literate, so they were unable to take the survey easily online. Multiple answers were recorded on quantitative survey. Hardcopy handouts were given out to staff members who did not have a computer terminal. Although directions on the form requested that only one answer be selected per question, on occasion, multiple answers were recorded. Response bias was controlled through the use of the IRB forms handed to all participants of the focus group which included confidentiality information. The focus group participants were not employees supervised by the author which also reduced bias.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH:

The Arboretum employees have a great passion for their work. They understand that things are changing and that they must change their workplace attitudes, approach to working as a team and communication habits to create and maintain workplace efficiency and productivity.

More research needs to be done to determine what information should be used on the Arboretum's Intranet, and to determine if a mentoring program or "Golden Link" program is feasible at the Arboretum.

CONCLUSION:

There are many methods of communication in the workplace. Studies support the findings that communication in the workplace will only get more confusing as the years progress. Generational communication is currently an issue but there are more similarities than differences when it comes to the way the different generations prefer to communicate. Although it isn't possible to target each individual's communication needs, especially when supervising a large number of employees, the key is to have an open conversation.

Ask questions about how your employees prefer to be communicated to. Would they be willing to use alternate forms of communication? Does the way you communicate impede their work performance? These are all questions you can ask to determine whether your team would benefit from a quick 10-minute meeting every morning before the workday begins, or is it an email? Phone and text seemed to be the least preferred method of communication among Arboretum employees. Supervisors also showed text and phone to be the least preferred, but that may change in the future.

The key is to keep the doors of communication open. The overall workplace experience at the Arboretum is positive, but the team is feeling the strain of growth. Emphasize accomplishment and pause for a moment to celebrate achievements before jumping to the next challenge. The objective of this research is to continue to improve communications in the workplace and maintain a healthy work environment.

FUTURE PLANS FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

Taking into consideration the findings from the Arboretum employee surveys, interviews and focus group while combining the findings with the information culled from the research, next steps would include the following.

Determination of a champion for implementation of the communication initiative the beginning a phased process to implement.

Phase 1 – Leverage face-to-face communication

Phase 2 – Implement team-building exercises to improve communication skills

Phase 3 – Introduce a plan for better use of existing technology (email, intranet, etc.) until budget allows for more feasible approach.

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Appendix A – IRB Exempt Study Notification



Nathan Kells <kells006@umn.edu>

1304E31181 - PI Kells - IRB - Exempt Study Notification

1 message

irb@umn.edu <irb@umn.edu>

Wed, May 1, 2013 at 10:00 AM

To: kells006@umn.edu

TO : eighmey@umn.edu, kells006@umn.edu,

The IRB: Human Subjects Committee determined that the referenced study is exempt from review under federal guidelines 45 CFR Part 46.101(b) category #2 SURVEYS/INTERVIEWS; STANDARDIZED EDUCATIONAL TESTS; OBSERVATION OF PUBLIC BEHAVIOR.

Study Number: 1304E31181

Principal Investigator: Nathan Kells

Title(s):

Multi-Generational Communications in the Workplace

This e-mail confirmation is your official University of Minnesota HRPP notification of exemption from full committee review. You will not receive a hard copy or letter.

This secure electronic notification between password protected authentications has been deemed by the University of Minnesota to constitute a legal signature.

The study number above is assigned to your research. That number and the title of your study must be used in all communication with the IRB office.

Research that involves observation can be approved under this category without obtaining consent.

SURVEY OR INTERVIEW RESEARCH APPROVED AS EXEMPT UNDER THIS CATEGORY IS LIMITED TO ADULT SUBJECTS.

This exemption is valid for five years from the date of this correspondence and will be filed inactive at that time. You will receive a notification prior to inactivation. If this research will extend beyond five years, you must submit a new application to the IRB before the study's expiration date.

Upon receipt of this email, you may begin your research. If you have questions, please call the IRB office at (612) 626-5654.

You may go to the View Completed section of eResearch Central at <http://eresearch.umn.edu/> to view further details on your study.

The IRB wishes you success with this research.

We have created a short survey that will only take a couple of minutes to complete. The questions are basic but will give us guidance on what areas are showing improvement and what areas we need to focus on:

<https://umsurvey.umn.edu/index.php?sid=94693&lang=um>

Research Information Sheet
An Analysis of Multi-Generational Communications in the Workplace
Focused on the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum

Principal Investigator (PI): Nathan Kells
School of Journalism and Mass Communication
(952) 210-0070

Purpose:

- You are being asked to be in a research study investigating the multi-generational differences in communication at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum because you are an employee of the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum. This study is being conducted at the University of Minnesota.

Study Procedures:

- If you take part in the study, you will be asked to participate in one interview, focus group, and/or survey where you will be asked a series of questions about your communication styles and how they relate to generational tendencies at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum. As a participant you have the choice not to answer any of the questions proposed and still remain in the study. The average length of the interview/focus group/survey will be 30 minutes.

Benefits

- As a participant in this research study, there will be no direct benefit for you; however, information from this study may benefit other people now or in the future.

Risks

- There are no known risks at this time to participation in this study.

Costs

- There will be no costs to you for participation in this research study.

Compensation

- You will not be paid for taking part in this study.

Confidentiality:

- All information collected about you during the course of this study will be kept without any identifiers.

Voluntary Participation /Withdrawal:

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You are free to not answer any questions or withdraw at any time. Your decision will not change any present or future relationships with the University of Minnesota or the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum.

Questions:

If you have any questions about this study now or in the future, you may contact Nathan Kells at the following phone number (952) 210-0070. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, Human Research Protection office can be contacted at (612) 626-5654. If you are unable to contact the research staff, or if you want to talk to someone other than the research staff, you may also call (612) 626-5654 to ask questions or voice concerns or complaints.

Participation:

By completing the interview, focus group, and/or survey you are agreeing to participate in this study.



Nathan Kells <kells006@umn.edu>

RE: IRB Submission - Nathan Kells - Multi-Generational Communications - Minnesota Landscape Arboretum

1 message

Exempt Inbox <rspperev@umn.edu>

Mon, Apr 8, 2013 at 10:27 AM

To: Nathan Kells <kells006@umn.edu>, John Eighmey <eighmey@umn.edu>

Dear Nathan,

Your exempt application has been entered and assigned Study #1304E31181.

Although you have listed advisor information on your application, an Appendix J is also required. Submitting the form now will avoid a stipulation at review.

Please copy your advisor on the submission.

Thank you,

Kathy Hoaglund

IRB Administrative Support

From: Nathan Kells [mailto:kells006@umn.edu]

Sent: Saturday, April 06, 2013 4:48 PM

To: rspperev@umn.edu; John Eighmey

Subject: IRB Submission - Nathan Kells - Multi-Generational Communications - Minnesota Landscape Arboretum

Good afternoon,

Please see attached IRB documentation for your approval. Feel free to contact me via email or any of the phone numbers below with any questions.

Thank you for your consideration.

Nate

Nathan Kells

Marketing & Membership Specialist

University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum

3675 Arboretum Drive

Chaska, MN 55318

(P) 952.443.4401 (M) 952.210.0070 (F) 952.443.2521

www.arboretum.umn.edu

This communication, including attachments, is intended only for the recipient(s) named above. It may be confidential and/or legally privileged, and must be treated as such in accordance with state and federal laws. If you are not the intended recipient or the individual responsible for delivering this communication to the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any use of this communication, or its contents, is strictly prohibited. If you have received this communication in error, please notify the sender by replying to this message and delete the communication from your computer system immediately.

Please consider the environment before printing this e-mail. Thank you.

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Appendix J Student as Principal Investigator Worksheet

Use this worksheet in collaboration with your Academic or Project Advisor to demonstrate research preparedness of the Student investigator.

To be completed by the Academic Advisor

1. Student academic level: (check all that apply)

- ☐ Undergraduate
☒ Graduate: ☒ Masters candidate ☐ PhD. candidate

2. Explain how the scope of the proposed project, including anticipated risks and benefits, is appropriate to student research?

My capstone project focuses on Multi-Generational Communications in the Workplace. The scope of the project involves surveying employees of the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum (from the College of CFANS) to see what varying styles of communication is preferred and if it is based on their generation? The project would also see if internal and external communications could be improved by targeting communication methods based on level and generation.

3. Explain what experience, training or special preparation, the student researcher brings to the project from relevant coursework or professional exposure:

I currently supervise a multi-generational team. I have noticed varying levels of communication barriers and would like to see if using this research could better improve the communication of the team.

As Academic or project advisor for the named student investigator, I assume the roles and responsibilities required to oversee the conduct of this research, prevent harms to subjects and foster benefits to the subjects. I will report any changes in the project, adverse events, or incidents to the IRB which may affect the conduct of this project.

Name of Academic Advisor (Printed)

Academic Advisor x500

Date

Advisors shoulder the responsibility for students engaged in independent research and should be copied on all correspondence.

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

By completing this form, I certify that the student researcher is knowledgeable about the regulations and policies governing research with human subjects and has sufficient training and experience to conduct this particular study in accordance with the research protocol.

Additionally:

By completing this form, I hereby confirm that I have thoroughly reviewed this IRB application and verify that it is complete and the research is appropriate for student research in topic and design.

I agree to meet with the student researcher on a regular basis to monitor study progress. I will arrange for communication during the course of the study if the procedures are carried out in a location away from the University or when regular channels of communication as not feasible.

I assure that the student researcher will promptly report unanticipated problems to the IRB and will adhere to all requirements for continuing review.

If I will be unavailable (e.g. sabbatical leave, vacation or resignation), I will arrange for an alternate faculty advisor to assume responsibility during my absence, and I will advise the IRB, in writing, of such changes.

If the student leaves the university, I will provide all the necessary documents for terminating the study or continuing review.

x500 of Faculty Advisor

Date

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

**Research Exempt from IRB Committee Review
Category 2:****SURVEYS/INTERVIEWS, STANDARD EDUCATION TESTS & OBSERVATIONS
OF PUBLIC BEHAVIOR**

Route this form to:

See instructions below.

U Wide Form:
UM 1571

December 2012

IRB Use Only

#

Submission Instructions:

This form, along with all other required material, may be submitted electronically to rspperev@umn.edu. Electronic submissions must be e-mailed directly from the principal investigator's University of Minnesota e-mail address (X500). If the Principal Investigator is a student, the faculty advisor must be carbon-copied (cc-ed) on the e-mail.

For help with this form and to download additional appendices: see <http://www.irb.umn.edu/exempt2.html#UI7N-YY5g4c> or call 612-626-5654

1.1 Project Title (Project title must match grant title. If different, also provide grant title):

Multi-Generational Communications in the Workplace

1.2 Principal Investigator (PI)

Name (Last name, First name MI): Kells, Nathan R		Highest Earned Degree: Bachelor of Science - Mass Communications	
Mailing Address: 925 Airport Road #107 Waconia, MN 55387		Phone Number: 952-210-0070	
		Pager or Cell Phone Number: 952-210-0070	
		Fax:	
U of M Employee/Student ID: 3974687		Email: kells006@umn.edu	
U of M x.500 ID (ex. smith001): kells006		University Department (if applicable):	
Occupational Position: <input type="checkbox"/> Faculty <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Student <input type="checkbox"/> Fairview Researcher <input type="checkbox"/> Gillette Researcher <input type="checkbox"/> Other:			
Human Subjects Training (one of these must be checked--refer to training links at the end of this section): <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CITI, <input type="checkbox"/> Investigator 101, <input type="checkbox"/> NIH training (EXCEPT for 5/8/06 to 2/29/08), <input type="checkbox"/> UMR/RCR (between 1994-2003)		HIPAA Training (Required if Data Contains PHI): <input type="checkbox"/> HIPAA	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other - Indicate training received, when and from which institution:			
As Principal Investigator of this study, I assure the IRB that the following statements are true: The information provided in this form is correct. I will seek and obtain prior written approval from the IRB for any substantive modifications in the proposal, including changes in procedures, co-investigators, funding agencies, etc. I will promptly report any unexpected or otherwise significant adverse events or unanticipated problems or incidents that may occur in the course of this study. I will report in writing any significant new findings which develop during the course of this study which may affect the risks and benefits to participation. I will not begin my research until I have received written notification of final IRB approval. I will comply with all IRB requests to report on the status of the study. I will maintain records of this research according to IRB guidelines. The grant that I have submitted to my funding agency which is submitted with this IRB submission accurately and completely reflects what is contained in this application. If these conditions are not met, I understand that approval of this research could be suspended or terminated.			
kells006		4/8/13	
x.500 of PI		Date	


Training Links:

Accepted Human Subjects Training: <http://www.irb.umn.edu/training.html#UIhRmYY5g4c>- "UM/RCR" includes all human subjects protection training offered in-person or online at the University of Minnesota from 1994-2003.


- The online NIH tutorial offered during the period May 8, 2006-February 29, 2008 is NOT acceptable to meet this requirement.

- If you completed a version of this training not included on the list provided, provide details as indicated

1.4 Are there additional Co-Investigators and Staff?

- ☐ Yes. Download an [extra personnel sheet](#) and include it with your application. 
- ☒ No. Continue to 1.5.

1.5 Is the PI of this research a student?

- ☒ Yes. . Include [Appendix J](#). 
- Electronically submitted protocols must be carbon copied (Cc) to their advisor.*
- ☐ No. Continue to 2.

Academic Advisor to the Student Investigator	
Advisor's Name (Last name, First name MI): John Eighmey	University Department: School of Journalism
Mailing Address: 111 Murphy Hall 206 Church St. SE Minneapolis, MN 55455	Phone Number: (612) 626-5528
	Email: eighmey@umn.edu
	U of M x.500 ID (ex. smith001): eighmey

2. Funding**2.1 Is this research funded by an internal or external agency?**

- ☐ Yes. Include [Appendix A](#). 
- ☒ No.

If no, explain how costs of research will be covered:

Any minimal costs will be covered by the researcher

3. Institutional Oversight**3.1 Is this research proposal being reviewed by any other institution or peer review committee?**

- ☐ Yes.
It is the responsibility of the PI to secure the appropriate approval from these committees and document that approval to the IRB. Attach a copy of documentation of approval, if received, and indicate committees below.

If yes, please list which committees will review this proposal:

- ☒ No.

4. Conflict of Interest

Federal Guidelines emphasize the importance of assuring there are no conflicts of interest in research projects that could affect the welfare of human subjects. Reporting of financial interests is required from all individuals responsible for the design, conduct or reporting of the research. If this study involves or presents a potential conflict of interest, additional information will need to be provided to the IRB.

Examples of conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to:

- A researcher participating in research on a technology, process or product owned by a business in which the researcher or family member holds a significant financial interest or a business interest
- A researcher participating in research on a technology, process or product developed by that researcher or family member
- A researcher or family member assuming an executive position in a business engaged in commercial or research activities related to the researcher's University responsibilities
- A researcher or family member serving on the Board of Directors of a business from which that member receives University-supervised Sponsored Research Support
- A researcher receiving consulting income from a business that funds his or her research

- A researcher receiving consulting income from a business that could benefit from the results of research sponsored by a federal agency (i.e. NIH)

“Family Member” means the covered individual’s spouse or domestic partner, dependent children, and any other family member whom the covered individual reasonably knows may benefit personally from actions taken by the covered individual on behalf of the University.
“Business Interest” means holding any executive position in, or membership on a board of a business entity, whether or not such activities are compensated.

For additional details and definitions, please refer to the appropriate policy:

University of Minnesota Researchers, please refer to:

<http://www.policy.umn.edu/Policies/Operations/Compliance/CONFLICTINTEREST.html>

University of Minnesota Researchers involved in clinical health care in the Academic Health Center, also refer to:

http://www.policy.umn.edu/Policies/Operations/Compliance/CONFLICTINTEREST_APPA.html

Fairview Health System Researchers, please refer to:

<http://www.fairview.org/Research/index.htm>

Gillette Children’s Specialty Healthcare Researchers, please refer to:

<http://www.gillettechildrens.org/>

4.1 Do any of the Investigators or personnel listed on this research project have a business interest or a financial interest of \$10,000 or more (\$5,000 or more if research is funded by a Public Health Service (PHS) agency or researcher is involved in clinical health care) associated with this study when aggregated for themselves and their family members?

- ☒ No.
☐ Yes.

If yes, identify the individual(s) and complete section 4.3:

4.2 Do any of the investigators or personnel (when aggregated for themselves and their family members) listed on this research have:

Ownership interests less than \$10,000 (\$5,000 if research is funded by PHS or researcher is involved in clinical health care) when the value of interest could be affected by the outcome of the research?

- ☒ No. ☐ Yes.

Ownership interests exceeding 5% interest in any one single entity (or any equity interest in a non-publicly traded entity if research is funded by PHS or researcher is involved in clinical health care)?

- ☒ No. ☐ Yes.

Compensation less than \$10,000 (\$5,000 if research is funded by PHS or researcher is involved in clinical health care) when the value of the compensation could be affected by the outcome of the research?

- ☒ No. ☐ Yes.

If yes, identify the individual(s) and complete section 4.3:

4.3 Has the business or financial interest been reported?

☒ N/A (No business or financial interest indicated in 4.1 or 4.2)

☐ No.

If you are a University of Minnesota researcher, please report your business or financial interest online via the Report of External Professional Activities (REPA) at:

http://egms.umn.edu/quickhelp/EGMS_Instructions/prepa.html

If you are a Fairview Health System researcher, please complete the Fairview Health Services Conflict of Interest Disclosure forms at:

<http://www.fairview.org/Research/BusinessOperations/ConflictsofInterest/index.htm>

and submit the completed forms to the Fairview Office of Research.

If you are a Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare researcher, please contact the Director of Research Administration, at 651-229-1745.

☐ Yes.

If yes, have you been informed that a Conflict of Interest Review Committee is reviewing the information you reported on your REPA? ☐ No.

☐ Yes.

The IRB will verify that a management plan is in place with the Conflict of Interest (COI) Program. If the COI Program does not have an approved management plan in place for this research, they will contact the individual(s) listed in question 4.1 for additional information.

Final IRB approval cannot be granted until all potential conflict matters are settled. The IRB receives a recommendation from the Conflict of Interest Review Committee regarding disclosure to subjects and management of any identified conflict. The convened IRB determines what disclosure language should be in the consent form.

5. Summary of Activities

Use lay language, do not cut and paste from or refer to a grant or an abstract.


5.1 Briefly state your research question.

Do employees of the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum (from the College of CFANS) have varying styles of preferred communications based on their generation? Could internal and external communications be improved by targeting communication methods based on level and generation.

5.2 Describe the tasks subjects will be asked to perform.

Describe the frequency and duration of procedures, psychological tests, educational tests, and experiments; including screening, intervention, follow-up etc. *Reminder:* No personal or sensitive information can be sought under exempt guidelines. (If you intend to pilot a process before recruiting for the main study please explain.)

Subjects will be asked to either participate in one survey or one interview (focus group or one-on-one) for the duration of no longer than 30 minutes.

Attach all surveys, instruments, interview questions, focus group questions etc. 

5.3 Describe what non-participants will do during this period (activities and supervision if applicable):

If your subjects will be students, it is important that the study design not penalize students who will not be participating if not all students will be participating.

Non-participants will not be affected by this study

5.4 How long do you anticipate this research study will last from the time you are determined to meet the criteria for exempt research?

Exempt research is generally considered short-term in nature. This office routinely inactivates exempt applications after five years from the time it was determined to meet the exempt criteria. If you think your project will extend beyond five years, contact the IRB office (612-626-5654 or irb@umn.edu).

This research study will last two months. The final presentation of the study is May 22nd, 2013

6. Participant Population

6.1 Expected Number of Participants: 200

of Male: 90 # Female: 110

6.2 Expected Age Range

Please confirm subjects are at least 18 years old, checking all that apply (you may not conduct research with subjects younger than 18 under exempt category two, if you would like to include subjects younger than 18, you must complete the full IRB application requesting expedited review if appropriate):

- ☒ 18-64
☒ 65 and older

6.3 Describe the criteria for inclusion and exclusion of subjects in this research study.

Inclusion Criteria:


Subjects must be an employee or volunteer of the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum

Exclusion Criteria:

Subjects who are not employees or volunteers of the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum

6.4 Location of Subjects during Research Data Collection

Check all that apply:

- ☐ Elementary/Secondary Schools (include Appendix M) 
☐ Community Center, specify: _____
☒ University Campus (non-clinical), specify: Conference rooms and office meetings
☐ Subject's Home, specify: _____
☐ International Location (include Appendix K): _____
☐ Other special institutions, specify: _____

7. Compensation

7.1 Will you give subjects gifts, payments, compensation, reimbursement, services without charge or extra credit?

- ☐ Yes.
☒ No.

If yes, please explain:

8. Recruitment

8.1 Are subjects chosen from records?

- ☐ Yes. Complete 8.1a-c
☒ No. Continue to 8.2

8.1a What type of records:

- ☐ Medical
☐ Educational
☐ Employment
☐ Other: _____

8.1b Are the records publicly available?


- ☐ Yes. Proceed to question 8.2
☐ No. Proceed to question 8.1c

8.1c Do you already have permissible access to the private records? (i.e. through your job, volunteer work, internship, etc.)

- ☐ Yes. Describe how you have permissible access.

- ☐ No. You must ask the custodian of the record to make initial contact for you (describe how they will do this in question 8.2) and let the potential subject contact you if they are interested. Attach a letter of cooperation from the custodian of the record indicating that they will make initial contact on your behalf. Please note that even if the custodian is willing to give you the private list, if you do not have permissible access to the records, the fact that the custodian will give you the list does not create permissible access. The custodian will still have to make initial contact.

8.2 Describe the recruitment process to be used:

Attach a copy of any and all recruitment materials to be used e.g. advertisements, bulletin board notices, e-mails, letters, phone scripts, or URLs. 

The subjects will be recruited from a convenient sample of personal connections and contacts acquired from past relationships

8.3 Explain who will approach potential subjects to take part in the research study and what will be done to protect individuals' privacy in this process:

Initial contact of subjects identified through records search must be made by the official holder of the record, i.e. primary physician, therapist, public school official.

The researcher will approach subjects to take part in the study. Records of contact will be held securely by the researcher and will not be provided to any outside reviewer.

9. Confidentiality

See *Protecting Private Data Guideline* from the Office of Information Technology (OIT) for information about protecting the privacy of research data.

9.1 Describe provisions that will be taken to maintain confidentiality of data (e.g. surveys, video, audio tape, photos):

All information collected about participants during the study will be kept without any identifiers. Surveys will be conducted via the internet where personal information is not recorded. For interviews, participants will be provided a confidentiality information form without a signature and no personal information will be recorded during the interviews in order to secure confidentiality- each interviewee will be given a number and no personal information will be stored.

9.2 Describe the security plan for data including where stored and for how long, noting that you may not keep identifiable data indefinitely:

Personal information will not be collected for this project. All participants for the survey and interviews will be given a number and no personal data will be collected connecting a participant to their number.

9.3 Will the PI have a link to identify subjects?

- ☒ Yes.
☐ No.

9.4 Will identifiable data be made available to anyone other than the PI?

- ☐ Yes.
☒ No.

If yes, explain who and why they will have access to the identifiable data:


10. Informed Consent Process

Reminder: If you are mailing a survey to subjects and asking them to return it to you, or doing a phone interview, you must send or read a consent statement which includes the same information as the consent form but is not signed.

10.1 Describe who will conduct the consent process with subjects and how consent will be obtained:

The researcher will be conducting the consent process. A consent information sheet will be provided to each subject. Their participation in the survey or interviews will be consent to the confidentiality agreement presented to them.

10.2 Recognizing that consent itself is a process of communication, describe what will be said to subjects to introduce the research: Do not say "see consent form". Write the explanation in lay language.

If you are using telephone surveys, attach telephone scripts. 

The subjects will be provided a brief description of the project and the tasks they are being asked to perform. They will be informed that there is no risk to participation, no costs to their participation and they have the option to not answer questions or leave the study at any time. This will be presented to them prior to the activity they will be performing. By choosing to participate, they are giving consent to the project.

10.3 Prepare and attach consent forms for review. For exempt category two research, it is not necessary to obtain signed documentation of consent (i.e. a signature). Please submit a 'consent information sheet' which does not include a signature line. The IRB office reserves the right to require that you obtain signatures, but in most cases it is not necessary.

Even though the IRB may determine that some research is exempt from the federal regulations, adequate provisions still need to be in place to protect research participants.

In making its consideration of exempt status, the HRPP/IRB office still has to determine that:

- a) The research involves no more than minimal risk to participants
- b) Selection of participants is equitable
- c) If there is recording of identifiable information, there are adequate provisions to maintain the confidentiality of the data
- d) If there are interactions with participants, there will be a consent process that will disclose such information as:
 - that the activity involves research
 - a description of the procedures
 - that participation is voluntary

- name and contact information for the investigator
- e) There are adequate provisions to maintain the privacy of participants.

Information Sheet for Research

This regulation does not apply to FDA regulated research.

You have reached the end of this form. Please make sure that you have responded to every question on this application (even if your response is "not applicable").

Multi-Generational Communication in the Workplace



1. What best represents your age?





		Response Percent	Response Count
18-32 Years		17.5%	17
33-48 Years		30.9%	30
49-67 Years		47.4%	46
68-93 Years		4.1%	4
Other (please specify)			0
answered question			97
skipped question			0

2. How many years have you worked at the Arboretum?




		Response Percent	Response Count
Less than 1 Year		9.4%	9
1-4 Years		30.2%	29
5-10 Years		27.1%	26
11-15 Years		9.4%	9
16-20 Years		6.3%	6
21-25 Years		11.5%	11
26+ Years		6.3%	6
answered question			96
skipped question			1

Multiple answers were recorded
Questions 11-18: Supervisors Only

5. What best describes how you prefer to RECEIVE information about CHANGES IN JOB POLICIES AND PROCEDURES



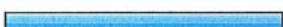
		Response Percent	Response Count
Phone/Voicemail		3.2%	3
Email/Instant Messaging/Online		66.0%	62
Text/Chat		1.1%	1
Face to Face Conversation		41.5%	39
Other (please specify)			3
answered question			94
skipped question			3

6. What best describes how you prefer to RECEIVE information about WORK PROJECTS





		Response Percent	Response Count
Phone/Voicemail		4.3%	4
Email/Instant Messaging/Online		43.0%	40
Text/Chat		0.0%	0
Face to Face Conversation		73.1%	68
Other (please specify)			4
answered question			93
skipped question			4

Multiple answers were recorded
Questions 11-18: Supervisors Only

7. What best describes how you prefer to RECEIVE information about CHANGES FOR PROJECTS

		Response Percent	Response Count
Phone/Voicemail		3.3%	3
Email/Instant Messaging/Online		46.2%	42
Text/Chat		0.0%	0
Face to Face Conversation		61.5%	56
Other (please specify)			6
answered question			91
skipped question			6




8. What best describes how you prefer to RECEIVE information about WORK PERFORMANCE ISSUES

		Response Percent	Response Count
Phone/Voicemail		4.5%	4
Email/Instant Messaging/Online		16.9%	15
Text/Chat		1.1%	1
Face to Face Conversation		83.1%	74
Other (please specify)			9
answered question			89
skipped question			8




Multiple answers were recorded
Questions 11-18: Supervisors Only

4 of 16

9. What best describes how you prefer to RECEIVE information about POSITIVE WORK PERFORMANCE OR KUDOS



		Response Percent	Response Count
Phone/Voicemail		2.3%	2
Email/Instant Messaging/Online		41.9%	36
Text/Chat		0.0%	0
Face to Face Conversation		70.9%	61
Other (please specify)			11
answered question			86
skipped question			11

10. What best describes how you prefer to RECEIVE information about COMMENTS IN GENERAL




		Response Percent	Response Count
Phone/Voicemail		6.5%	6
Email/Instant Messaging/Online		53.3%	49
Text/Chat		0.0%	0
Face to Face Conversation		52.2%	48
Other (please specify)			7
answered question			92
skipped question			5

Multiple answers were recorded
Questions 11-18: Supervisors Only

11. My job responsibilities include SUPERVISORY DUTIES OF OTHER EMPLOYEES

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		40.0%	38
No		60.0%	57
answered question			95
skipped question			2

12. What describes how you PRESENT information about POLICIES AND PROCEDURES to employees you supervise?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Phone/Voicemail		2.5%	1
Email/Instant Messaging/Online		32.5%	13
Text/Chat		0.0%	0
Face to Face Conversation		80.0%	32
Other (please specify)			42
answered question			40
skipped question			57

Multiple answers were recorded
Questions 11-18: Supervisors Only

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13. What best describes how you PRESENT information about CHANGES IN POLICIES AND PROCEDURES to employees you supervise?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Phone/Voicemail	0.0%	0
Email/Instant Messaging/Online	39.0%	16
Text/Chat	0.0%	0
Face to Face Conversation	73.2%	30
Other (please specify)		39
answered question		41
skipped question		56





14. What best describes how you PRESENT information about NEW PROJECTS to employees you supervise?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Phone/Voicemail	0.0%	0
Email/Instant Messaging/Online	28.6%	12
Text/Chat	0.0%	0
Face to Face Conversation	83.3%	35
Other (please specify)		40
answered question		42
skipped question		55



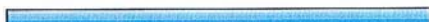
Multiple answers were recorded
Questions 11-18: Supervisors Only

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15. What best describes how you PRESENT information about PROJECT UPDATES to employees you supervise?


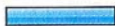


		Response Percent	Response Count
Phone/Voicemail		4.8%	2
Email/Instant Messaging/Online		45.2%	19
Text/Chat		4.8%	2
Face to Face Conversation		66.7%	28
Other (please specify)			40
answered question			42
skipped question			55

16. What best describes how you PRESENT information about WORK PERFORMANCE to employees you supervise?





		Response Percent	Response Count
Phone/Voicemail		2.6%	1
Email/Instant Messaging/Online		10.3%	4
Text/Chat		0.0%	0
Face to Face Conversation		94.9%	37
Other (please specify)			41
answered question			39
skipped question			58

Multiple answers were recorded
Questions 11-18: Supervisors Only

17. What best describes how you PRESENT information about POSITIVE WORK PERFORMANCE OR KUDOS to employees you supervise

	Response Percent	Response Count
Phone/Voicemail 	2.6%	1
Email/Instant Messaging/Online 	23.7%	9
Text/Chat 	2.6%	1
Face to Face Conversation 	81.6%	31
Other (please specify)		42
answered question		38
skipped question		59





18. This is how I usually share information about GENERAL COMMENTS or WORKPLACE CONCERNS with others.

	Response Percent	Response Count
Phone/Voicemail 	6.3%	4
Email/Instant Messaging/Online 	42.2%	27
Text/Chat 	1.6%	1
Face to Face Conversation 	75.0%	48
Other (please specify)		25
answered question		64
skipped question		33






Multiple answers were recorded
Questions 11-18: Supervisors Only

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19. On average, what describes the amount of time spent on PHONE/VOICEMAIL in your job? (per day)

		Response Percent	Response Count
None		11.5%	11
0-1 Hours		68.8%	66
2-3 Hours		18.8%	18
4-5 Hours		1.0%	1
6-7 Hours		0.0%	0
8+ Hours		0.0%	0
Other (please specify)			0
answered question			96
skipped question			1

20. On average, what describes the amount of time spent on EMAIL/INSTANT MESSAGING/ONLINE in your job? (per day)



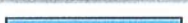



		Response Percent	Response Count
None		16.7%	16
0-1 Hours		36.5%	35
2-3 Hours		27.1%	26
4-5 Hours		14.6%	14
6-7 Hours		5.2%	5
8+ Hours		0.0%	0
Other (please specify)			1
answered question			96
skipped question			1

Multiple answers were recorded
Questions 11-18: Supervisors Only

21. On average, what describes the amount of time spent TEXT MESSAGING in your job? (per day)			
		Response Percent	Response Count
None		74.7%	71
0-1 Hours		25.3%	24
2-3 Hours		0.0%	0
4-5 Hours		0.0%	0
6-7 Hours		0.0%	0
8+ Hours		0.0%	0
Other (please specify)			1
answered question			95
skipped question			2

Multiple answers were recorded
Questions 11-18: Supervisors Only


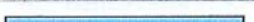



22. On average, what describes the amount of time spent in FACE TO FACE CONVERSATION in your job? (per day)

		Response Percent	Response Count
None		1.0%	1
0-1 Hours		32.3%	31
2-3 Hours		38.5%	37
4-5 Hours		10.4%	10
6-7 Hours		10.4%	10
8+ Hours		7.3%	7
Other (please specify)			1

answered question 96






skipped question 1

23. How likely are you to try new methods of communication at your job?





		Response Percent	Response Count
Extremely Likely		16.8%	16
Likely		52.6%	50
Not Sure		22.1%	21
Unlikely		6.3%	6
Extremely Unlikely		2.1%	2
answered question			95
skipped question			2

Multiple answers were recorded
Questions 11-18: Supervisors Only

24. I would consider myself to be TECHNOLOGY savvy.



		Response Percent	Response Count
Agree		28.1%	27
Somewhat Agree		33.3%	32
Neutral		18.8%	18
Somewhat Disagree		16.7%	16
Disagree		3.1%	3
answered question			96
skipped question			1

25. I would consider myself to be most effective when I communicate with others using this method






		Response Percent	Response Count
Phone/Voicemail		8.4%	8
Email/Instant Messaging/Online		34.7%	33
Text/Chat		5.3%	5
Face to Face Conversation		75.8%	72
Other (please specify)			3
answered question			95
skipped question			2

Multiple answers were recorded
Questions 11-18: Supervisors Only

26. What best describes your gender?



		Response Percent	Response Count
Male		29.2%	28
Female		70.8%	68
answered question			96
skipped question			1

27. I would use multiple forms of technology when communicating with others at work



		Response Percent	Response Count
Very Likely		32.3%	31
Likely		44.8%	43
Not Sure		10.4%	10
Somewhat Likely		8.3%	8
Not Likely		4.2%	4
Other (please specify)			0
answered question			96
skipped question			1

Multiple answers were recorded
Questions 11-18: Supervisors Only

28. I currently use the Arboretum's Intranet as a resource

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		69.8%	67
No		30.2%	29
	Other (please specify)		0
	answered question		96
	skipped question		1

29. I can be contacted for additional information

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		67.7%	65
No		32.3%	31
	Other (please specify)		33
	answered question		96
	skipped question		1

Multiple answers were recorded
Questions 11-18: Supervisors Only

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Multi-Generational Communication in the Workplace



1. What best represents your age?					
	What best represents your age?				
	18-32 Years	33-48 Years	49-67 Years	68-93 Years	Response Totals
18-32 Years	100.0% (17)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	17.5% (17)
33-48 Years	0.0% (0)	100.0% (30)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	30.9% (30)
49-67 Years	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	100.0% (46)	0.0% (0)	47.4% (46)
68-93 Years	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	100.0% (4)	4.1% (4)
Other (please specify)	0 replies	0 replies	0 replies	0 replies	0
answered question	17	30	46	4	97
skipped question					0

Multiple answers were recorded
Questions 11-18: Supervisors Only

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2. How many years have you worked at the Arboretum?					
	What best represents your age?				
	18-32 Years	33-48 Years	49-67 Years	68-93 Years	Response Totals
Less than 1 Year	17.6% (3)	20.0% (6)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	9.4% (9)
1-4 Years	17.6% (3)	36.7% (11)	28.9% (13)	50.0% (2)	30.2% (29)
5-10 Years	52.9% (9)	23.3% (7)	20.0% (9)	25.0% (1)	27.1% (26)
11-15 Years	11.8% (2)	10.0% (3)	8.9% (4)	0.0% (0)	9.4% (9)
16-20 Years	0.0% (0)	10.0% (3)	6.7% (3)	0.0% (0)	6.3% (6)
21-25 Years	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	22.2% (10)	25.0% (1)	11.5% (11)
26+ Years	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	13.3% (6)	0.0% (0)	6.3% (6)
answered question	17	30	45	4	96
skipped question					1

Multiple answers were recorded
 Questions 11-18: Supervisors Only
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3. What best describes responsibilities in your current job?					
	What best represents your age?				
	18-32 Years	33-48 Years	49-67 Years	68-93 Years	Response Totals
Garden Crew	35.7% (5)	25.0% (7)	17.5% (7)	0.0% (0)	22.4% (19)
Building Crew	21.4% (3)	21.4% (6)	2.5% (1)	0.0% (0)	11.8% (10)
Support Staff	21.4% (3)	28.6% (8)	42.5% (17)	100.0% (3)	36.5% (31)
Supervisor	7.1% (1)	3.6% (1)	15.0% (6)	0.0% (0)	9.4% (8)
Manager	7.1% (1)	7.1% (2)	20.0% (8)	0.0% (0)	12.9% (11)
Director	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	2.5% (1)	0.0% (0)	1.2% (1)
Front Line Staff	7.1% (1)	14.3% (4)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	5.9% (5)
Other (please specify)	4 replies	2 replies	5 replies	1 reply	12
answered question	14	28	40	3	85
skipped question					12

Multiple answers were recorded
Questions 11-18: Supervisors Only

4. What best describes how you prefer to RECEIVE information about JOB POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

	What best represents your age?				Response Totals
	18-32 Years	33-48 Years	49-67 Years	68-93 Years	
Phone/Voicemail	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.7% (3)	0.0% (0)	3.2% (3)
Email/Instant Messaging/Online	56.3% (9)	66.7% (20)	80.0% (36)	25.0% (1)	69.5% (66)
Text/Chat	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	2.2% (1)	0.0% (0)	1.1% (1)
Face to Face Conversation	56.3% (9)	33.3% (10)	35.6% (16)	75.0% (3)	40.0% (38)
Other (please specify)	1 reply	0 replies	1 reply	0 replies	2
answered question	16	30	45	4	95
skipped question					2

Multiple answers were recorded
Questions 11-18: Supervisors Only

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5. What best describes how you prefer to RECEIVE information about CHANGES IN JOB POLICIES AND PROCEDURES					
	What best represents your age?				
	18-32 Years	33-48 Years	49-67 Years	68-93 Years	Response Totals
Phone/Voicemail	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	4.5% (2)	25.0% (1)	3.2% (3)
Email/Instant Messaging/Online	50.0% (8)	60.0% (18)	79.5% (35)	25.0% (1)	66.0% (62)
Text/Chat	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	2.3% (1)	0.0% (0)	1.1% (1)
Face to Face Conversation	62.5% (10)	43.3% (13)	31.8% (14)	50.0% (2)	41.5% (39)
Other (please specify)	2 replies	0 replies	1 reply	0 replies	3
answered question	10	30	44	4	94
skipped question					3

Multiple answers were recorded
Questions 11-18: Supervisors Only

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6. What best describes how you prefer to RECEIVE information about WORK PROJECTS					
	What best represents your age?				
	18-32 Years	33-48 Years	49-67 Years	68-93 Years	Response Totals
Phone/Voicemail	0.0% (0)	3.4% (1)	6.8% (3)	0.0% (0)	4.3% (4)
Email/Instant Messaging/Online	43.8% (7)	34.5% (10)	50.0% (22)	25.0% (1)	43.0% (40)
Text/Chat	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Face to Face Conversation	81.3% (13)	75.9% (22)	68.2% (30)	75.0% (3)	73.1% (68)
Other (please specify)	1 reply	1 reply	2 replies	0 replies	4
answered question	16	29	44	4	93
skipped question					4

Multiple answers were recorded
Questions 11-18: Supervisors Only

7. What best describes how you prefer to RECEIVE information about CHANGES FOR PROJECTS					
	What best represents your age?				Response Totals
	18-32 Years	33-48 Years	49-67 Years	68-93 Years	
Phone/Voicemail	0.0% (0)	3.6% (1)	4.5% (2)	0.0% (0)	3.3% (3)
Email/Instant Messaging/Online	56.3% (9)	39.3% (11)	50.0% (22)	0.0% (0)	46.2% (42)
Text/Chat	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Face to Face Conversation	56.3% (9)	67.9% (19)	56.8% (25)	100.0% (3)	61.5% (56)
Other (please specify)	1 reply	2 replies	2 replies	1 reply	6
answered question	16	28	44	3	91
skipped question					6

Multiple answers were recorded
Questions 11-18: Supervisors Only

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8. What best describes how you prefer to RECEIVE information about WORK PERFORMANCE ISSUES

	What best represents your age?				Response Totals
	18-32 Years	33-48 Years	49-67 Years	68-93 Years	
Phone/Voicemail	0.0% (0)	6.9% (2)	4.9% (2)	0.0% (0)	4.5% (4)
Email/Instant Messaging/Online	25.0% (4)	13.8% (4)	17.1% (7)	0.0% (0)	16.9% (15)
Text/Chat	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	33.3% (1)	1.1% (1)
Face to Face Conversation	81.3% (13)	86.2% (25)	82.9% (34)	66.7% (2)	83.1% (74)
Other (please specify)	2 replies	1 reply	5 replies	1 reply	9
answered question	16	29	41	3	89
skipped question					8

Multiple answers were recorded
Questions 11-18: Supervisors Only

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9. What best describes how you prefer to RECEIVE information about POSITIVE WORK PERFORMANCE OR KUDOS					
	What best represents your age?				Response Totals
	18-32 Years	33-48 Years	49-67 Years	68-93 Years	
Phone/Voicemail	0.0% (0)	3.7% (1)	2.5% (1)	0.0% (0)	2.3% (2)
Email/Instant Messaging/Online	56.3% (9)	33.3% (9)	42.5% (17)	33.3% (1)	41.9% (36)
Text/Chat	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Face to Face Conversation	62.5% (10)	81.5% (22)	67.5% (27)	66.7% (2)	70.9% (61)
Other (please specify)	2 replies	3 replies	5 replies	1 reply	11
answered question	10	27	40	3	86
skipped question					11

Multiple answers were recorded
Questions 11-18: Supervisors Only

10. What best describes how you prefer to RECEIVE information about COMMENTS IN GENERAL

	What best represents your age?				
	18-32 Years	33-48 Years	49-67 Years	68-93 Years	Response Totals
Phone/Voicemail	6.3% (1)	6.7% (2)	7.0% (3)	0.0% (0)	6.5% (6)
Email/Instant Messaging/Online	62.5% (10)	46.7% (14)	58.1% (25)	0.0% (0)	53.3% (49)
Text/Chat	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Face to Face Conversation	43.8% (7)	56.7% (17)	48.8% (21)	100.0% (3)	52.2% (48)
Other (please specify)	2 replies	0 replies	4 replies	1 reply	7
answered question	16	30	43	3	92
skipped question					5

11. My job responsibilities include SUPERVISORY DUTIES OF OTHER EMPLOYEES

	What best represents your age?				
	18-32 Years	33-48 Years	49-67 Years	68-93 Years	Response Totals
Yes	23.5% (4)	30.0% (9)	56.8% (25)	0.0% (0)	40.0% (38)
No	76.5% (13)	70.0% (21)	43.2% (19)	100.0% (4)	60.0% (57)
answered question	17	30	44	4	95
skipped question					2

Multiple answers were recorded
Questions 11-18: Supervisors Only

12. What describes how you PRESENT information about POLICIES AND PROCEDURES to employees you supervise?					
	What best represents your age?				
	18-32 Years	33-48 Years	49-67 Years	68-93 Years	Response Totals
Phone/Voicemail	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	4.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	2.5% (1)
Email/Instant Messaging/Online	40.0% (2)	20.0% (2)	36.0% (9)	0.0% (0)	32.5% (13)
Text/Chat	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Face to Face Conversation	80.0% (4)	90.0% (9)	76.0% (19)	0.0% (0)	80.0% (32)
Other (please specify)	7 replies	16 replies	16 replies	3 replies	42
answered question	5	10	25	0	40
skipped question					57

Multiple answers were recorded
Questions 11-18: Supervisors Only

13. What best describes how you PRESENT information about CHANGES IN POLICIES AND PROCEDURES to employees you supervise?

	What best represents your age?				Response Totals
	18-32 Years	33-48 Years	49-67 Years	68-93 Years	
Phone/Voicemail	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Email/Instant Messaging/Online	60.0% (3)	20.0% (2)	42.3% (11)	0.0% (0)	39.0% (16)
Text/Chat	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Face to Face Conversation	40.0% (2)	90.0% (9)	73.1% (19)	0.0% (0)	73.2% (30)
Other (please specify)	7 replies	15 replies	14 replies	3 replies	39
answered question	5	10	26	0	41
skipped question					56

Multiple answers were recorded
Questions 11-18: Supervisors Only

14. What best describes how you PRESENT information about NEW PROJECTS to employees you supervise?					
	What best represents your age?				
	18-32 Years	33-48 Years	49-67 Years	68-93 Years	Response Totals
Phone/Voicemail	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Email/Instant Messaging/Online	60.0% (3)	10.0% (1)	29.6% (8)	0.0% (0)	28.6% (12)
Text/Chat	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Face to Face Conversation	80.0% (4)	90.0% (9)	81.5% (22)	0.0% (0)	83.3% (35)
Other (please specify)	7 replies	15 replies	15 replies	3 replies	40
answered question	5	10	27	0	42
skipped question					55

Multiple answers were recorded
Questions 11-18: Supervisors Only

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15. What best describes how you PRESENT information about PROJECT UPDATES to employees you supervise?

	What best represents your age?				Response Totals
	18-32 Years	33-48 Years	49-67 Years	68-93 Years	
Phone/Voicemail	20.0% (1)	10.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	4.8% (2)
Email/Instant Messaging/Online	80.0% (4)	20.0% (2)	48.1% (13)	0.0% (0)	45.2% (19)
Text/Chat	40.0% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	4.8% (2)
Face to Face Conversation	60.0% (3)	70.0% (7)	66.7% (18)	0.0% (0)	66.7% (28)
Other (please specify)	8 replies	15 replies	14 replies	3 replies	40
answered question	5	10	27	0	42
skipped question					55

Multiple answers were recorded
Questions 11-18: Supervisors Only

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17. What best describes how you PRESENT information about POSITIVE WORK PERFORMANCE OR KUDOS to employees you supervise					
	What best represents your age?				Response Totals
	18-32 Years	33-48 Years	49-67 Years	68-93 Years	
Phone/Voicemail	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	4.3% (1)	0.0% (0)	2.6% (1)
Email/Instant Messaging/Online	20.0% (1)	20.0% (2)	26.1% (6)	0.0% (0)	23.7% (9)
Text/Chat	20.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	2.6% (1)
Face to Face Conversation	100.0% (5)	80.0% (8)	78.3% (18)	0.0% (0)	81.6% (31)
Other (please specify)	7 replies	15 replies	17 replies	3 replies	42
answered question	5	10	23	0	38
skipped question					59

Multiple answers were recorded
Questions 11-18: Supervisors Only

18. This is how I usually share information about GENERAL COMMENTS or WORKPLACE CONCERNS with others.					
	What best represents your age?				Response Totals
	18-32 Years	33-48 Years	49-67 Years	68-93 Years	
Phone/Voicemail	12.5% (1)	0.0% (0)	9.1% (3)	0.0% (0)	6.3% (4)
Email/Instant Messaging/Online	62.5% (5)	30.0% (6)	48.5% (16)	0.0% (0)	42.2% (27)
Text/Chat	0.0% (0)	5.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.6% (1)
Face to Face Conversation	62.5% (5)	85.0% (17)	69.7% (23)	100.0% (3)	75.0% (48)
Other (please specify)	6 replies	9 replies	9 replies	1 reply	25
answered question	8	20	33	3	64
skipped question					33

Multiple answers were recorded
Questions 11-18: Supervisors Only

19. On average, what describes the amount of time spent on PHONE/VOICEMAIL in your job? (per day)					
	What best represents your age?				
	18-32 Years	33-48 Years	49-67 Years	68-93 Years	Response Totals
None	23.5% (4)	10.0% (3)	8.9% (4)	0.0% (0)	11.5% (11)
0-1 Hours	70.6% (12)	66.7% (20)	71.1% (32)	50.0% (2)	68.8% (66)
2-3 Hours	5.9% (1)	20.0% (6)	20.0% (9)	50.0% (2)	18.8% (18)
4-5 Hours	0.0% (0)	3.3% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.0% (1)
6-7 Hours	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
8+ Hours	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Other (please specify)	0 replies	0 replies	0 replies	0 replies	0
answered question	17	30	45	4	96
skipped question					1

Multiple answers were recorded
Questions 11-18: Supervisors Only

20. On average, what describes the amount of time spent on EMAIL/INSTANT MESSAGING/ONLINE in your job? (per day)					
	What best represents your age?				
	18-32 Years	33-48 Years	49-67 Years	68-93 Years	Response Totals
None	41.2% (7)	6.7% (2)	13.3% (6)	25.0% (1)	16.7% (16)
0-1 Hours	11.8% (2)	43.3% (13)	40.0% (18)	50.0% (2)	36.5% (35)
2-3 Hours	23.5% (4)	33.3% (10)	24.4% (11)	25.0% (1)	27.1% (26)
4-5 Hours	11.8% (2)	10.0% (3)	20.0% (9)	0.0% (0)	14.6% (14)
6-7 Hours	11.8% (2)	6.7% (2)	2.2% (1)	0.0% (0)	5.2% (5)
8+ Hours	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Other (please specify)	1 reply	0 replies	0 replies	0 replies	1
answered question	17	30	45	4	96
skipped question					1

Multiple answers were recorded
Questions 11-18: Supervisors Only

21. On average, what describes the amount of time spent TEXT MESSAGING in your job? (per day)					
	What best represents your age?				Response Totals
	18-32 Years	33-48 Years	49-67 Years	68-93 Years	
None	82.4% (14)	70.0% (21)	72.7% (32)	100.0% (4)	74.7% (71)
0-1 Hours	17.6% (3)	30.0% (9)	27.3% (12)	0.0% (0)	25.3% (24)
2-3 Hours	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
4-5 Hours	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
6-7 Hours	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
8+ Hours	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Other (please specify)	0 replies	0 replies	1 reply	0 replies	1
answered question	17	30	44	4	95
skipped question					2

Multiple answers were recorded
Questions 11-18: Supervisors Only

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22. On average, what describes the amount of time spent in FACE TO FACE CONVERSATION in your job? (per day)					
	What best represents your age?				
	18-32 Years	33-48 Years	49-67 Years	68-93 Years	Response Totals
None	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	2.2% (1)	0.0% (0)	1.0% (1)
0-1 Hours	11.8% (2)	40.0% (12)	35.6% (16)	25.0% (1)	32.3% (31)
2-3 Hours	29.4% (5)	26.7% (8)	48.9% (22)	50.0% (2)	38.5% (37)
4-5 Hours	11.8% (2)	16.7% (5)	4.4% (2)	25.0% (1)	10.4% (10)
6-7 Hours	23.5% (4)	10.0% (3)	6.7% (3)	0.0% (0)	10.4% (10)
8+ Hours	23.5% (4)	6.7% (2)	2.2% (1)	0.0% (0)	7.3% (7)
Other (please specify)	1 reply	0 replies	0 replies	0 replies	1
answered question	17	30	45	4	96
skipped question					1

Multiple answers were recorded
Questions 11-18: Supervisors Only

23. How likely are you to try new methods of communication at your job?					
	What best represents your age?				
	18-32 Years	33-48 Years	49-67 Years	68-93 Years	Response Totals
Extremely Likely	18.8% (3)	23.3% (7)	11.1% (5)	25.0% (1)	16.8% (16)
Likely	37.5% (6)	56.7% (17)	57.8% (26)	25.0% (1)	52.6% (50)
Not Sure	43.8% (7)	10.0% (3)	20.0% (9)	50.0% (2)	22.1% (21)
Unlikely	0.0% (0)	10.0% (3)	6.7% (3)	0.0% (0)	6.3% (6)
Extremely Unlikely	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	4.4% (2)	0.0% (0)	2.1% (2)
answered question	16	30	45	4	95
skipped question					2

Multiple answers were recorded
Questions 11-18: Supervisors Only

25. I would consider myself to be most effective when I communicate with others using this method

	What best represents your age?				
	18-32 Years	33-48 Years	49-67 Years	68-93 Years	Response Totals
Phone/Voicemail	6.3% (1)	3.3% (1)	13.3% (6)	0.0% (0)	8.4% (8)
Email/Instant Messaging/Online	37.5% (6)	40.0% (12)	31.1% (14)	25.0% (1)	34.7% (33)
Text/Chat	12.5% (2)	10.0% (3)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	5.3% (5)
Face to Face Conversation	87.5% (14)	66.7% (20)	77.8% (35)	75.0% (3)	75.8% (72)
Other (please specify)	2 replies	1 reply	0 replies	0 replies	3
answered question	16	30	45	4	95
skipped question					2

26. What best describes your gender?

	What best represents your age?				
	18-32 Years	33-48 Years	49-67 Years	68-93 Years	Response Totals
Male	29.4% (5)	26.7% (8)	28.9% (13)	50.0% (2)	29.2% (28)
Female	70.6% (12)	73.3% (22)	71.1% (32)	50.0% (2)	70.8% (68)
answered question	17	30	45	4	96
skipped question					1

Multiple answers were recorded
Questions 11-18: Supervisors Only

27. I would use multiple forms of technology when communicating with others at work					
	What best represents your age?				
	18-32 Years	33-48 Years	49-67 Years	68-93 Years	Response Totals
Very Likely	29.4% (5)	36.7% (11)	31.1% (14)	25.0% (1)	32.3% (31)
Likely	41.2% (7)	50.0% (15)	42.2% (19)	50.0% (2)	44.8% (43)
Not Sure	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	20.0% (9)	25.0% (1)	10.4% (10)
Somewhat Likely	23.5% (4)	6.7% (2)	4.4% (2)	0.0% (0)	8.3% (8)
Not Likely	5.9% (1)	6.7% (2)	2.2% (1)	0.0% (0)	4.2% (4)
Other (please specify)	0 replies	0 replies	0 replies	0 replies	0
answered question	17	30	45	4	96
skipped question					1

Multiple answers were recorded
Questions 11-18: Supervisors Only

AM

28. I currently use the Arboretum's Intranet as a resource					
	What best represents your age?				
	18-32 Years	33-48 Years	49-67 Years	68-93 Years	Response Totals
Yes	52.9% (9)	66.7% (20)	80.0% (36)	50.0% (2)	69.8% (67)
No	47.1% (8)	33.3% (10)	20.0% (9)	50.0% (2)	30.2% (29)
Other (please specify)	0 replies	0 replies	0 replies	0 replies	0
answered question	17	30	45	4	96
skipped question					1

29. I can be contacted for additional information					
	What best represents your age?				
	18-32 Years	33-48 Years	49-67 Years	68-93 Years	Response Totals
Yes	47.1% (8)	63.3% (19)	80.0% (36)	50.0% (2)	67.7% (65)
No	52.9% (9)	36.7% (11)	20.0% (9)	50.0% (2)	32.3% (31)
Other (please specify)	5 replies	8 replies	19 replies	1 reply	33
answered question	17	30	45	4	96
skipped question					1

Multiple answers were recorded
Questions 11-18: Supervisors Only

Interview 1

1. How many people do you currently supervise? Previous Experience

2. Do you supervise employees that are younger and older than you?

When I was a Bank Manager I supervised employees younger and older than me.

3. Is it possible to personalize your methods of communication for each person you supervise? Please elaborate

I believe it is possible to personalize communication to fit the individual you are talking to. I think that this is done by getting to know the person. If you learn what communication style works best with them you can make it much easier by communicating to them in the manner they prefer.

4. Which of the following methods do you use most often to communicate?

Phone/Voicemail

Email/Instant Messaging/Online-Work

Text/Chat-Personal

Face to Face Conversation-Work

Other

5. Do you have specific examples of communication breakdown between you and an employee you supervise? Do not give names. (exp. a project is done wrong because of the way it was relayed or perceived) Please elaborate

I assigned 2 of my employees to come up with a monthly branch contest. It just so happens that I chose an older employee and a younger employee. The older employee wanted to sit down and discuss a plan as to how they would accomplish the goal set out in front of them. The younger employee simply said "I'll text ideas to you as they come to me." My older employee found this form of communication very frustrating and came to me concerned that the project wouldn't be completed in time if the 2 employees didn't find some time to sit down and discuss it. I was able to sit down with both of them and we were able to set some time aside while they were working for them to discuss the project.

6. What can you do to improve communications with your staff? Please elaborate

I think that the best way to improve communication with staff is to consistently have one on one conversation's with them. This allows any misunderstandings or issues to be dealt with immediately. Having regularly scheduled meetings is also very positive.

7. What can your staff do to better improve communications with you? Please elaborate

I always had an open door policy for all of my employees. If there was something that they needed to discuss with me they were always welcome to do so. I feel this only made my team stronger.

8. Do you feel that communication needs between multiple generations have any effect on the performance of employees? Please elaborate

I do believe that communication between multiple generations does have an effect on employees performance. There were times where younger employees had a hard time working with older employees because they felt as if they couldn't relate to them and vice versa. Sometimes there were conversations going on amongst my younger staff members that my older staff members were unfamiliar with, for example certain pop culture topics.

Interview 2.

1. How many people do you currently supervise? 7

2. Do you supervise employees that are younger and older than you? Yes

3. Is it possible to personalize your methods of communication for each person you supervise? Please elaborate. Yes at times although it depends on the circumstances. If it is a message that you only need to communicate with one person, you can tailor it to that person.

However, if it is something that needs to be communicated to the entire group you might need to do a meeting or email. Time sensitivity would also play a role in how you are able to communicate the message.

4. Which of the following methods do you use most often to communicate?

Phone/Voicemail- Yes

Email/Instant Messaging/Online – Yes, email

Text/Chat - yes

Face to Face Conversation - Yes

Other – hand written notes/messages/reminders

5. Do you have specific examples of communication breakdown between you and an employee you supervise? Do not give names. (exp. a project is done wrong because of the way it was relayed or perceived) Please elaborate. Yes, there have been times where tasks were not completed correctly due to a misunderstanding and the person not perceiving the message correctly.

6. What can you do to improve communications with your staff? Please elaborate.

In my experience, communication breakdown has been due to misunderstanding a written message. The receiver of the message is unable to ask questions or get clarification immediately so they may complete the task on how they perceived the message and not how it was intended. I feel this can be alleviated by being extremely clear in written instructions or having a conversation via phone or face to face. Also, in written communications provide the deadline so the employee knows when the task should be completed by.

As far as overall communication in the workplace I feel the tone is set by the manager.

First, they must communicate their expectations and to be clear and specific.

Without this employees can't reach their target performance if they don't know what the target is.

Second, be available if the employee has questions/issues/concerns and let them know you are open to hearing their ideas and opinions on things too. That they can bring things to your attention.

Third, follow-up with the employee and periodically check in to see how things are going and provide feedback (positive or negative) on their performance.

Doing these things will build a solid working relationship and everyone knows what is expected and where they stand which overall can improve employee morale which leads to increased productivity and better work performance.

7. What can your staff do to better improve communications with you? Please elaborate.

Keep me in the loop on things. If I need to know something right away then let me know right away. When taking phone messages, be sure to write them down and deliver them to the appropriate person. Many times calls are taken but the messages aren't passed on.

8. Do you feel that communication needs between multiple generations have any effect on the performance of employees? Please elaborate

I think it can if employees don't realize there is a difference between how generations or specific people prefer to communicate. For example if you have an employee who doesn't like to check their email, everyone should know that is not their preferred method of communication so not to send important or urgent messages via email since it probably isn't checked as often. This could definitely lead to performance issues.

I once read an article on the importance of knowing how your boss would like you to communicate things with them (call/text/email/voicemail). I also feel this is true between coworkers. Once you know this information, communication will be much more efficient for both the sender and receiver of the message.

Interview 3

1. How many people do you currently supervise? 16
2. Do you supervise employees that are younger and older than you?
Both but mostly older
3. Is it possible to personalize your methods of communication for each person you supervise? Please elaborate
In some cases yes – if the communication goes to various people and/or I need written backup I will email
4. Which of the following methods do you use most often to communicate?
Phone/Voicemail
Email/Instant Messaging/Online
Text/Chat
Face to Face Conversation
Other
5. Do you have specific examples of communication breakdown between you and an employee you supervise? Do not give names. (exp. a project is done wrong because of the way it was relayed or perceived) Please elaborate
Recently one of the people I supervise did not follow a procedure that has been in place for 3+ years and he/she stated he/she didn't follow the procedure as he/she 'wasn't aware of the change'. After having a lengthy conversation about the policy/procedure and showing the employee the written policy that backs up my statements to him/her I provided a written summary of our conversation that re-stated the policy so that there are no further errors. I also followed up with other staff in that area to ensure everyone was aware of the policy in place.
6. What can you do to improve communications with your staff? Please elaborate
Take the time to be pro-active regarding needs & expectations – through meetings & delegation of duties.
7. What can your staff do to better improve communications with you? Please elaborate
The biggest thing they can do is when they bring a problem to me is think through a suggestion on how to fix the issue – not just layout the problems they see without any initiative to fix the issue.
8. Do you feel that communication needs between multiple generations have any effect on the performance of employees? Please elaborate
Yes and no – I think communication needs vary not so much based on generations but on the individuals personalities. I believe you need to understand your employee's motivation for working at your organization and work to foster an environment that gives them the best atmosphere to achieve their goals both personally & professionally while balancing the needs of the organization.

Interview 4:

1. How many people do you currently supervise? 50 or so
2. Do you supervise employees that are younger and older than you? yes, both younger and older
3. Is it possible to personalize your methods of communication for each person you supervise? Please elaborate it's very difficult because I supervise so many people. It's easier to have a morning meeting a 10-15 minute morning meeting to cover the important points for the day.
4. Which of the following methods do you use most often to communicate?
Phone/Voicemail

Email/Instant Messaging/Online

Text/Chat

Face to Face Conversation

Other

5. Do you have specific examples of communication breakdown between you and an employee you supervise? Do not give names. (exp. a project is done wrong because of the way it was relayed or perceived) Please elaborate sometimes people hear or don't hear what I think I've told them. Or they don't pay attention to what I'm saying in the first place.

6. What can you do to improve communications with your staff? Please elaborate I could be more prepared myself, I try to write down on the white board important events that are coming up in the next few weeks but we always seem to be flying by the seat of our pants.

7. What can your staff do to better improve communications with you? Please elaborate They could try a little harder to keep up on events, they could pay attention at the morning meetings and contribute to the meetings.

8. Do you feel that communication needs between multiple generations have any effect on the performance of employees? Please elaborate yes, I can get the attention of the older employees easier or they seem to pay a little more attention to the meetings. The younger staff are texting, or chatting to each other or they look like they would rather be napping in the morning.

Interview 5:

1. How many people do you currently supervise? 50 or so

2. Do you supervise employees that are younger and older than you? yes, both younger and older

3. Is it possible to personalize your methods of communication for each person you supervise? Please elaborate it's very difficult because I supervisor so many people. It's easier to have a morning meeting a 10-15 minute morning meeting to cover the important points for the day.

4. Which of the following methods do you use most often to communicate?

Phone/Voicemail

Email/Instant Messaging/Online

Text/Chat

Face to Face Conversation

Other

5. Do you have specific examples of communication breakdown between you and an employee you supervise? Do not give names. (exp. a project is done wrong because of the way it was relayed or perceived) Please elaborate sometimes people hear or don't hear what I think I've told them. Or they don't pay attention to what I'm saying in the first place.

6. What can you do to improve communications with your staff? Please elaborate I could be more prepared myself, I try to write down on the white board important events that are coming up in the next few weeks but we always seem to be flying by the seat of our pants.

7. What can your staff do to better improve communications with you? Please elaborate They could try a little harder to keep up on events, they could pay attention at the morning meetings and contribute to the meetings.

8. Do you feel that communication needs between multiple generations have any effect on the performance of employees? Please elaborate yes, I can get the attention of the older employees easier or they seem to pay a little more attention to the meetings. The younger staff are texting, or chatting to each other or they look like they would rather be napping in the morning.

Interview 6:

1. How many people do you currently supervise? 5

2. Do you supervise employees that are younger and older than you? Older

3. Is it possible to personalize your methods of communication for each person you supervise? Please elaborate

I manage 5 people – ALL with completely different personalities ... so my challenge is to manage them based on my companies mission but also customize to match their personalities ...

4. Which of the following methods do you use most often to communicate?

Phone/Voicemail

Email/Instant Messaging/Online 75%

Text/Chat

Face to Face Conversation 25%

Other

5. Do you have specific examples of communication breakdown between you and an employee you supervise? Do not give names. (exp. a project is done wrong because of the way it was relayed or perceived) Please elaborate

When I address a problem and do not include all the individuals that were involved it's difficult to get the true story – when people aren't present to defend themselves / nor help with coming up with a solution so the problem doesn't happen again

6. What can you do to improve communications with your staff? Please elaborate – be a better Coach – encourage them to come to me with a solution to the problem we are addressing

7. What can your staff do to better improve communications with you? Please elaborate – understand that I do not point fingers to give blame – I want to find a solution to whatever happened so it doesn't happen again ... too often employees think about what they did and what the consequences might be rather than what they can do moving forward to eliminate the same mistakes

8. Do you feel that communication needs between multiple generations have any effect on the performance of employees? A concern within our organization – with some understanding electronic communication while others don't or don't want to understand it ... therefore meetings, meetings, meetings, meetings ... we have lots of meetings for a small company (35 employees)

MULTI-GENERATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS FOCUS GROUP

TRANSCRIPTION

Moderator (M) Today are all here to participate in a focus group.

(M) You are current original employees. Some of the challenges we face is that we're open seven days a week and we are full-and part-time staff and it becomes a challenge to communicate with all of those people.

(M) Today we're going to try to see if there better ways to communicate with staff. With an expectation for growth in the future communication will be extremely important.

(M) Whatever we say it stays within this group and within this room on everything is total totally confidential. No names will be used are published but what we are looking for is open and honest discussion about any issues and positive or negative about current communication.

(M) You all took the survey on generational communication in the workplace so this is kind of a follow-up to that survey wherein that uses focus group to deepen the initial findings of the larger quantitative survey.

(M) Some of this session has to do with grounds crew so we'll leave that for later. In the surveys, I talked about email conversation, face-to-face conversation, text messaging and phone/voicemail.

(M) Some of the things they want to talk about is the current usage of the intranet. Do any of you use the intranet that the intern that intranet. What do you use the intranet for?

Participant (P) Manages to check my own personal email, not for communicating.

(P) I use it to go the Internet.

(P) I use the intranet to get different forms express requests etc.

(P) I going to the internal intranet to access email and see the contact list of employees.

(P) Mostly for express request scheduling. It works well. If I am at the front desk, it is easy to tell someone what is coming up for events, etc.

(P) I use it to run reports for upcoming meetings events etc. and for forms.

(M) Can you see this being used differently as a supervisor?

(P) For me it seems to work well for what I need. I can access things I need on the weekend such as injury reports, severe weather procedures etc. It is a bit difficult to use at first but if you use it a bit you can get used to it. You just have to play around a bit.

(P) It think it is an underutilized but nice tool that is in a good location for everything.

(P) At another job, I used the intranet for alerts but here there are lots of things happening - there's lots of Arb-2All emails so you have to kind of think about it.

(P) I see more news releases or was it is going to be like this weekend on email instead of the intranet.

(P) I think it would be good to use the intranet for personal staff items – like if someone needs employee vacation donation or different things. Maybe they are selling something and we don't want to send out an Arb-2-All to everyone.

(M) Do you see any challenges to getting information to the garden crew when they are out on the grounds?

(P) It is always an issue getting the information out to them. Some even check their emails from home because of the lack of computer accessibility.

(P) There's a lot of people that don't even know what's on that intranet.

(P) I agree. Until I was here more often I didn't even know what it was. For your part-time staff, we never even knew how to access it.

(M) What would you expect to find on an Intranet?

(P) Confidential information...

(P) The expectation to use it as a source of information is great but then we have to be willing to make sure to put all important items on the intranet.

(M) In your everyday Arboretum communication, how do you generally communicate with your employees?

(P) I would say face-to-face is the most used second to email.

(P) A quick face-to-face email is easy – most of the time I get information from email but if it's something that I wanted it done soon, I have to do by phone face-to-face so I have a guarantee that the project or request was finished.

(P) On the other hand, if you do it by email, you at least have a written record to keep track of.

(M) In regards to just getting general information out to people, what are some positives of the current system?

(P) Is there a system? There isn't anything written out there's no system that I can see.

(P) I don't know about any a procedure of getting information to certain ground staff. Some are able to get the information; most of the grounds staff doesn't use it in Internet.

(P) To get that information provided at the all staff meeting sometimes very important announcements kind of get lost in the beginning and not really repeated.

(M) What do you think of budgeting in order to incorporate monitors on the walls of the interior employee halls to stream the intranet? Examples in the hallway downstairs – examples of using the monitors to show policies, procedures and events.

(P) How do you information on there? Would it look like that information on the intranet? Just on a larger screen? I think that would be great if we could put information on that someone would keep current.

(P) An area or department person would have to be appointed and always be responsible for posting it. (P) I'm wondering how that would work. Would you be standing there looking at it – waiting to hear about severe weather? During the severe weather you need instant access to information.

(P) Would the monitors be public? I don't think that would be appropriate.

(M) I think the monitors would be mainly used in the staff/employee areas of the Arboretum.

(P) It would be nice to have it in the basement of the Snyder building, HRC, headhouse and one in the back shop and lunchroom.

(M) It would almost be like the current system when an alert comes up on the computer screen.

(P) The only issue is that you would have to be at your desk for it to be effective.

(P) Bookends of information in short phrases – likely could be used for things such as tornado warnings since they are few and far between.

(M) Do feel this would help the situation?

(P) There has to be some personal responsibility. Like looking for answers to questions about event's etc. such as in the magazine, news releases, etc.

(P) There is definitely a problem we've had here. It is because of a lack of communication.

(M) How do we get the communication out to 200 people in the summertime?

(M) Do you think it has to do with the issue of having so many different modes of communication? An excuse so people can say I wasn't at the staff meeting, I didn't get that email or that this would be one catchall or one place that was a source of communication.

(P) I think it would make sense in one centralized location – something would give daily information so you didn't have the excuse that you didn't read the email, etc. or that I am not scheduled in the morning so I'm not at the staff meetings.

(P) You know the saying – you can lead a horse to water but you can't stick his head in their head in and make them drink!

(P) I think the concept is a good idea because I like email but I get so clogged up and if I'm gone for one day it takes me two weeks to get through emails – some I never even get opened up. I sometimes have a thousand left from five days ago.

(P) I guess you can always lead a horse to water but if there's one source of water in our information, or stories about it are all the same, then it is easier to understand. It is hard when there are puddles here and there.

(P) Some of the common sense issues here are that we have people who either don't have access to computers or don't want to have access to computers.

(P) There's a lot of people here that don't want to use email on his computer at all and I have people that prefer computers and the Internet.

(P) Those people probably on the grounds, at the HRC or somewhere remote.

(P) It seems to me that the communication breakdown because people in certain departments prefer to stay autonomous. Confidential information....

(P) They prefer to keep information private and not share with other departments.

(P) When we are on the front line and we are unaware of the information needed to give the customer the correct answers, it is hard to do my job to the fullest.

(P) Sometimes we have to scramble to pull information off the website or look at press releases to let people know what's going on.

(P) In regards to email, if you don't get it that day then the information is old. Sometimes I don't get time to check emails before heading out.

(P) I have learned to communicate with my crew by having morning meetings – just 10 minutes every morning. I pull information off emails, website, etc and glean everything off what's happening in other areas of Arboretum information.

(P) The meeting is also used to assign gardeners specific duties for the day.

(M) You feel that's an effective way to communicate with your staff?

(P) Yes, I think it is effective but it does take time to pull from all areas of the Arboretum to get the information together. It might be easier if all of the information was all in one place but all within categories or divisions.

(P) There is a lot going on around here and it's only getting it worse. With more and more programming and events coming up, face-to-face is a good way of communicating but it may not be the most effective. Maybe there needs to be two levels of communication.

(P) Maybe there's week to week or month when the magazine comes out but there's daily things that it doesn't cover.

(P) Maybe the intranet could have categories so it makes it a more likely place to allow the supervisor to disperse that information.

(P) If one department was in charge of creating content it might be easier.

(P) Maybe there's something about the intranet though - other arboretum employees could use it as a place for things that are of a more personal nature.

(P) Personal things could be announced similar to the previous Arboretum staff newsletter. It used to come out every Friday.

(P) It was a lot of work on that staff but it shared some great information.

(P) We got rid of the person that did that and then we didn't do it anymore.

(M) What kind of information was in there?

(P) It was mostly upcoming birthdays, parties, promotions, personal stories about people.

(P) I remember when I first started there was little bits and pieces in the newsletter like - I'm selling Girl Scout cookies and selling my car.

(P) We can't use Arb-2-All email because it has to only be used for more professional information disbursement because today the emails go to campus.

(M) A lot of the research in the study focuses on multigenerational communication. Do feel that they are generational communications and the workplace?

(M) Broken out by boomers, matures, gen X and millennials.

(M) Boomers are the largest part of the workforce. Do boomers make up the largest portion of staff at the arboretum? Yes

(P) There are definitely differences!

(P) The older generation doesn't want to use computer and your generation wants to use computers and iPhones.

(M) Have you felt you have had to shift the way you supervise because of that?

(P) No, They need to shift their style.

(M) Do you have any specific examples of communication with younger generations? Examples of both younger and older.

(P) I say they have to shift to me. An example when I was talking to younger workers and I left emails to see if they could work but I never got a response. One day I saw their brother and he sent him a text and got an answer immediately. He called and said he never reads email anymore.

(P) That is how I feel most of those kids operate email – it is passé – now it has moved to text.

(P) My wife even sends a text to her grandkids all the time – she has to do it or they won't respond.

(P) The way I see it is that if you wanted to improve communication, you have to put together print, email and text in some way.

(M) How do you communicate with the kids now?

(P) They know to check email now because I told them if they want hours they have to get back to me by the next day so I can get them on the schedule.

(P) If they don't get back to me they don't get hours. And that works because it's printed in the afternoon.

(P) I do feel that there needs to be compromises on both sides.

(P) I fought texting for years, I was refusing for so long but my gosh, it's a lifesaver.

(P) I think the younger generation has to give in a bit too. Not everything has to be conveyed by text.

(P) There is currently some sort of Arboretum texting use right now. I use my own phone to contact many people on a daily basis. I prefer text, especially when I am not working on Sunday. It is easier to just send a quick text and the issue is resolved. No phone talking.

(P) I oversee younger employees than me - before the two younger ones came along, I never texted and then I had to go to unlimited because people at work, the people I oversee are communicating via text mostly but I don't think it's an effective form of communication.

(P) There usually texting me on the days that I'm not working also so it's better than calling me and bothering me.

(P) I don't think my staff knows the mission – their main concern is to keep the place beautiful. They don't really know what the mission is now. Ten years ago, no one really talked about it.

(M) We are at the last portion of the group. I would like to thank you for participating. Have a great day everyone!